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# PROCEEDINGS

—OF THE—

## FITCHBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY

AND PAPERS RELATING TO THE

### HISTORY OF THE TOWN

READ BY SOME OF THE MEMBERS.

*VOLUME I.*



FITCHBURG, MASS.:

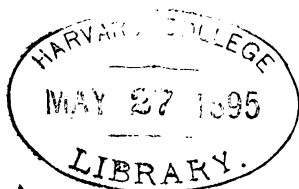
PUBLISHED BY THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

1895.



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*By exchange*

SENTINEL PRINTING COMPANY,  
FITCHBURG.

OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY,  
1895.

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*President,*  
HENRY A. WILLIS.

*Vice Presidents,*  
HENRY A. GOODRICH,                      FREDERICK F. WOODWARD.

*Secretary,*  
JAMES F. D. GARFIELD.

*Treasurer and Librarian,*  
ATHERTON P. MASON.

*Committee on Nominations,*  
EBENEZER BAILEY, 3 years.      CHARLES E. WARE, 2 years.  
CHARLES FOSDICK, 1 year.

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# CONSTITUTION

—OF THE—

## FITCHBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

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### ARTICLE I.—NAME.

This society shall be called the FITCHBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

### ARTICLE II.—OBJECTS.

The objects of this society shall be to encourage among its members a love of antiquarian research, and to collect and preserve the materials for local history and genealogy—particularly such as pertain to Fitchburg and the towns of northern Worcester County; also the collection of books, coins and relics.

### ARTICLE III.—OFFICERS.

The officers of this society shall consist of a President, two Vice Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer, and Librarian; to be elected by ballot, and to hold office for the term of one year, and until their successors are chosen.

### ARTICLE IV.—DUTIES OF OFFICERS.

1. It shall be the duty of the President to preside at the meetings of the society. In his absence it shall be the duty of the First Vice President, or in his absence of the Second Vice President to preside; and in the absence of all three a president *pro tem.* shall be chosen.

2. It shall be the duty of the Secretary to keep a record of all meetings of the society in a book for that purpose; to issue all notices of meetings of the society; to notify all persons of their election as members; to notify any members of their election to office who may not be present at the time of their election; to conduct the general correspondence of the society, and at the expiration of his term of office to turn over to his successor all books and papers belonging to the society.

3. The Treasurer shall be the sole custodian of all funds of the society, and of all property or titles to property, real or personal, belonging to the society, except such as is otherwise provided for. He shall assess and collect all dues and taxes voted by the society, receive any legacies bequeathed, or donations made to its funds; shall disburse the moneys so received and collected, on a written order signed by the President and Secretary, but not otherwise. He shall keep in a book provided for the purpose a true account of all receipts and disbursements; shall submit the same to the inspection of any member when requested; shall submit in writing a report of all his receipts and disbursements for the year, and exhibit his vouchers for the same, at the annual meeting; shall furnish a bond for the faithful discharge of his duties, whenever the society by a vote may so direct; and shall, at the expiration of his term of office, deliver into the hands of his successor all books, papers and other property belonging to the society.

4.—LIBRARIAN. The Librarian shall be the sole custodian of books, pamphlets, coins, medals, relics, portraits, engravings, and other collections belonging to the society; shall catalogue the same in a book kept for the purpose; shall have the care of the entire collection, and shall report at the annual meeting the condition of the same, and any additions made during the year.

#### ARTICLE V.—COMMITTEES.

1. The President, two Vice Presidents, Secretary and Treasurer shall constitute a committee of five to be known as the Executive Committee, who shall have in charge the general interests of the society; aid by personal influence or by solicitation in securing additions to the society's funds or its collections; prepare for the press any publications of the society; see that the votes of the society are promptly carried out, and that the provisions of this constitution are properly maintained.

2. The society shall, at its annual meeting in January, 1893, elect by ballot three persons—one to serve for one year, one for two years and one for three years; and at each succeeding annual meeting one to serve for three years—who shall be called the Standing Committee on Nominations. It shall be their duty to examine the qualifications of every person proposed for membership, and to put in nomination such persons as they in their judgment think will promote the interests of the society. Other committees may be chosen as occasion requires, but *all* committees shall report their doings in writing.



ARTICLE VI.—MEMBERS.

1. The name and qualifications for membership of any person of good moral character, having an interest in the objects of this society, may be presented at any meeting thereof, and referred to the Standing Committee on Nominations; and such person may at the next regular meeting, on nomination by said committee, be elected by a two-thirds vote of those present. But no person shall be considered a member until he shall have signed the constitution and paid into the treasury the sum of two dollars.

Previous to the annual meeting in January, 1893, the Executive Committee shall act as committee on nominations.

2. Active members may become life members by the payment at any one time of twenty-five dollars into the treasury of the society, and thereafter shall be exempt from all assessments.

ARTICLE VII.—HONORARY AND CORRESPONDING MEMBERS.

Honorary and corresponding members may be proposed and elected in the same manner as prescribed for active members; but corresponding members shall not be residents of the city of Fitchburg.

ARTICLE VIII.—DUTIES OF MEMBERS.

1. It shall be the duty of each member to fill any office or perform any service to which he may be elected or appointed; to contribute so far as may be to the number and value of the society's collections; to bring it to the knowledge and consideration of persons of similar tastes and pursuits; to propose for membership such persons as are known to be interested in its work.

2. It will be expected of honorary and corresponding members that they will endeavor to add to the society's collections, and to contribute by correspondence or otherwise as they may be able, to add to the interest of the society's proceedings; and both honorary and corresponding members shall be entitled to all the privileges of active members, except the right to hold office, and shall be exempt from the admission fee and all assessments.

ARTICLE IX.—MEETINGS.

The annual meeting for the election of officers and the transaction of other business shall be held on the second Tuesday\* in January of each year, at which time the several annual reports from officers and committees shall be submitted to the society. The newly elected officers shall

\*Date of annual meeting changed to third Monday in January.

not, however, assume their official duties until the third Monday in the month of February following. The other regular meetings shall be held on the third Monday of each month, excepting July and August. Special meetings may be called by the President, or upon the written request of any three members of the society. Five members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

#### ARTICLE X.—ASSESSMENTS AND DISBURSEMENTS.

1. The society may, at any regular meeting, by vote, assess a tax upon its active members, not exceeding one dollar *per capita*; but at any annual meeting the society may assess such sum as may be needed for carrying on the affairs of the society.

2. All claims against the society shall be approved by the member contracting the same, and paid by the Treasurer on a written order signed by the President and Secretary.

#### ARTICLE XI.—FAILURES, WITHDRAWALS AND EXPULSIONS.

1. Any member who for two consecutive years shall fail to pay any assessment made in accordance with the provisions of this constitution, and shall give no satisfactory reason therefor, shall cease to be a member of the society; and the Treasurer shall notify the Secretary, who shall make record of the fact.

2. Any member may withdraw from the society by giving notice of his intention to the Secretary and paying all assessments due at the time of giving such notice, and the Secretary shall make record of the fact.

3. Any member may for breach of trust, malfeasance in office, or other cause, be expelled from the society by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any regular meeting; *provided* that the number present shall be not less than a majority of the whole number of active members, and *provided* also, that such member shall have had an opportunity to be heard in his own defence at some regular meeting.

#### ARTICLE XII.—AMENDMENTS.

Alterations or amendments to this constitution may be made at any regular meeting by a two-thirds vote; provided that notice of the proposed change has been given in writing at some previous meeting.

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#### AMENDMENTS ADOPTED.

1. LIFE MEMBERSHIP.—See page 11, last paragraph.
2. ANNUAL MEETING.—See page 15, second paragraph.

## PROCEEDINGS.

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The Fitchburg Historical Society was organized at a meeting called for that purpose, at 81 Grove street, on the evening of February 3d, 1892. There were present at the meeting the following named gentlemen, viz.: Henry A. Willis, Ebenezer Bailey, Atherton P. Mason, Frederick F. Woodward, John H. Daniels, John W. Kimball, Frederick A. Currier and J. F. D. Garfield. The meeting was organized by the choice of Henry A. Willis as chairman, and J. F. D. Garfield as secretary.

A form of constitution for the government of the society was presented, and after slight changes adopted. The meeting was adjourned to meet on Tuesday evening, Feb. 16, at the same place.

FEBRUARY 16, 1892.—Adjourned meeting, Henry A. Willis in the chair. The following persons were elected members, viz.: E. Foster Bailey, Henry A. Goodrich, Dr. George Jewett, Rodney Wallace, George T. Daniels, Dr. Charles H. Rice and Joseph G. Edgerly.

The organization of the society was completed by the election of the following officers:

<i>President,</i>	Henry A. Willis.
<i>First Vice President,</i>	Henry A. Goodrich.
<i>Second Vice President,</i>	Frederick F. Woodward.
<i>Treasurer and Librarian,</i>	Atherton P. Mason.
<i>Secretary,</i>	James F. D. Garfield.

MARCH 21, 1892.—Regular meeting, at 81 Grove street, President Willis in the chair. The following persons were elected to membership: Alonzo P. Goodridge, Arthur H. Lowe, John Upton, Edward P. Downe, Alfred R. Ordway, William M. Willis, Walter A. Davis, Charles E. Ware, Charles Fosdick, David M. Dillon, Fred N. Dillon.

The following persons were elected as corresponding members: Hon. Ivers Phillips, Boulder, Colorado; Ex-Gov. Charles Robinson, Lawrence, Kansas; Ray Greene Huling, New Bedford; George E. Towne, Brookline; Thomas C. Caldwell, Boston; Dr. James S. Greene, Boston.

President Willis and Vice Presidents Goodrich and Woodward were chosen a committee to consider the subject of procuring suitable rooms for the use of the society.

A paper was read by the secretary of the society on the early history of the Fitchburg Fire Department.

APRIL 18, 1892.—Regular meeting at the residence of the president, 138 Prichard street, President Willis in the chair.

The secretary read a paper entitled "Fitchburg's Response to the Lexington Alarm," giving complete rolls of the two companies that marched from Fitchburg on the 19th of April, 1775.

President Willis read a paper entitled "The Early Days of Railroads in Fitchburg," embracing the period from 1840 to 1850, giving interesting details of the inception and progress to completion of the Fitchburg, the Cheshire, and the Fitchburg & Worcester roads.

Letters were read from Messrs. Ivers Phillips, George E. Towne, Ray Greene Huling and Dr. James S. Greene, accepting corresponding membership.

MAY 16, 1892.—Regular meeting at 138 Prichard street, President Willis in the chair. Harrison Bailey and Rev. Walter F. Greenman of Fitchburg, and William Baker of Lunenburg, were elected to membership. A letter was read from Ex-Gov. Charles Robinson of Lawrence, Kansas, accepting corresponding membership.

A letter from the treasurer of the Fitchburg Literary Club (Eben. Bailey) was read by Dr. Mason, announcing a gift to this society from the club. The letter was accompanied by a check for \$89.10. Thereupon it was

Voted, That the thanks of the society be presented to the members of the Fitchburg Literary Club for their generous donation, and that the secretary be instructed to make a record of the gift, and to enter the names of the members of said club on the records of our society in token of our appreciation of their thoughtful and generous action.

The committee previously chosen for the purpose presented a design for a seal for the consideration of the meeting. After some discussion the matter was recommitted to the committee for further consideration.

A paper was read by the secretary, giving the rolls of five companies—three from Leominster and two from Lunenburg—that responded to the Lexington alarm on the 19th of April, 1775.

JUNE 20, 1892.—The society met at 138 Prichard street, President Willis in the chair. Amasa Norcross, Henry Jackson, Charles C. Stratton and Harry G. Townsend were elected to membership.

Section 2 of Article 6 of the constitution of the society was amended to read as follows:

"2. Any person elected to active membership may become a life member by the payment at any one time of



twenty-five dollars into the treasury of the society, and thereafter shall be exempt from all assessments."

The subject of erecting permanent monuments to mark certain localities of historic interest was introduced by the president, and referred to a committee.

SEPTEMBER 10, 1892.—The regular meeting—the first after the summer vacation—was held at 138 Prichard street, President Willis in the chair. A statement being made that the old communion set belonging to the first church of Fitchburg was still in existence, scattered among different families of the parish, it was voted that an effort be made to collect the scattered pieces and place them in the keeping of this society. A committee was appointed for that purpose.

OCTOBER 17, 1892.—The regular monthly meeting was held at the residence of the secretary, 81 Grove street, President Willis in the chair. The president, as chairman of the committee appointed at the June meeting, reported that a petition had been sent to the city council asking the co-operation of the city in the erection of three monuments to mark historic sites of local interest:—first, the location of the first settlement or Page garrison house, and the tavern where the first town meeting, the first school and the first religious services were held; second, the rendezvous of the minute men of 1775; and third, the home of John Fitch, for whom Fitchburg was named. He also presented for consideration forms of inscription to be placed on the proposed monuments.

NOVEMBER 21, 1892.—The regular monthly meeting was held at the residence of the president, 138 Prichard street, the president in the chair. Henry O. Putnam of Fitchburg was elected to membership, and Francis Tinker of Norwood was elected a corresponding member.

The committee appointed to procure a seal for the society presented a second design. "In the foreground is seen a beaver constructing a dam; near by is a wigwam, and in the rear are the forest, and the settler hewing down the trees, while his primitive log house is visible still further back. In the far distance are the symbols of civilization—the church spire, tall chimney, mill and dwellings." The words "History, Biography, Genealogy" and the motto "To preserve and transmit" appear within the circle, while in the marginal ring are the words "Fitchburg Historical Society. Feb. 3, 1892." The report of the committee was accepted and the design adopted.

At this meeting the importance of having the records of the town of Fitchburg printed was discussed. These records furnish the groundwork for the history of the town; their absolute safety can only be assured by a multiplication and distribution of copies. It was urged that this society might appropriately use its influence toward the promotion of this important object.

The subject of the erection of memorial tablets was referred to, and it was announced that the city council had made an appropriation of two hundred and twenty-five dollars for the erection of the three monuments proposed by this society, and that a committee of the council having the matter in charge had invited members of the society to a conference on the subject.

DECEMBER 19, 1892.—The regular monthly meeting was held at 138 Prichard street, President Willis in the chair.

The librarian reported the receipt of thirty-six bound volumes of the *Fitchburg Daily Sentinel*, comprising a complete file of that paper from its commencement in 1873 to July 1, 1892, presented to the society by J. F. D. Garfield.

The secretary read some interesting extracts from the early records of the First Church of Fitchburg—from 1768 to 1794—while under the pastoral care of Rev. John Payson.

The question of rooms for the use of the society was discussed, but no action was taken.

JANUARY 10, 1893.—The annual meeting of the society was held at the common council room, city hall building, President Willis in the chair. The secretary, treasurer and librarian presented their annual reports.

The following officers were elected:

*President*, . . . . Henry A. Willis.

*Vice Presidents*, . . . . { Henry A. Goodrich.  
Frederick F. Woodward.

*Secretary*, . . . . James F. D. Garfield.

*Treasurer and Librarian*, Atherton P. Mason.

*Standing Committee on Nominations*:—Charles Fosdick, for three years; Eben. Bailey, for two years; David M. Dillon, for one year.

A letter was read from Francis Tinker, Esq., of Norwood, accepting corresponding membership; also a paper contributed by Mr. Tinker, it being a copy of a letter addressed by the selectmen of Fitchburg in 1776 "To the Committee of Clothing for Massachusetts Bay," asking pay from the colony for the heirs of John Gibson, of Fitchburg, who was killed at the battle of Bunker Hill; he "not having drawn a coat or any money in lieu thereof."

Voted, that the secretary be instructed to prepare an abstract of the proceedings of the society from its organization, for publication in connection with papers read at the meetings.

FEBRUARY 20, 1893.—The regular monthly meeting was held at the office of Superintendent J. G. Edgerly, President Willis in the chair.

Mr. William A. Emerson of Fitchburg was elected to membership, and Mr. L. B. Caswell of Athol was elected a corresponding member.

Voted, to amend Article 9, Section 1, of the constitution—changing the date for holding the annual meeting—making it read “the third Monday in January” instead of the “second Tuesday,” as heretofore.

Mr. E. F. Bailey presented to the society the manuscript records and correspondence of the Fitchburg Freedmen's Aid Society. Mr. Eben. Bailey presented an interesting manuscript letter from Hon. Ezra S. Stearns of Rindge, N. H., relative to the date of the John Fitch capture; and referring to efforts made during the latter part of the last century to form a new town to include parts of Fitchburg, Westminster and Ashburnham; and to the building of a meeting-house designed for the use of the proposed new town, which structure at length came to be known as “the Lord's barn.”

The librarian reported the receipt of four volumes containing the records of the First Church and First Parish of Fitchburg, for the hundred years following the organization of the church in 1768; the same having been placed in the custody of this society by vote of the parish at its annual meeting in January.

President Willis read a letter from Col. Ivers Phillips of Boulder, Col., giving information in regard to the old Fitchburg High School Association, formed in 1830, including a list of the shareholders, of whom Col. Phillips is the sole survivor.

A letter was read from Charles H. Haynes of New York, a native of Fitchburg, giving the exact location of the Page garrison house, near the present junction of Wood and Pearl streets.

MARCH 20, 1893.—Regular meeting, at the common council room, President Willis in the chair.

Mrs. Florence R. D. Daniels and Mrs. Martha L. Weyman were elected to membership, and Mr. Francis B. Shepley of Boston, Rev. George S. Ball of Upton, and Hon. Ezra S. Stearns of Rindge, N. H., were elected corresponding members. A letter was read from L. B. Caswell of Athol, accepting corresponding membership.

The chairman of the committee on memorials reported that the three monuments proposed by the society to mark historic sites would cost about five hundred dollars; whereupon the committee was authorized to petition the city government in the name of the society for an appropriation sufficient to cover the cost of the work.

President Willis read a letter from Col. Ivers Phillips of Boulder, Col., giving many interesting facts in relation to the early history of Fitchburg. He also read a paper, consisting of a stenographic report of an interview with Mr. Silas Whitney Hutchinson of Lunenburg, a native of Fitchburg and a resident here for sixty-five years. Mr. Hutchinson, being in his ninety-third year, with a memory remarkably retentive, was able to give many interesting reminiscences of his early days, and incidents in the early history of the town.

APRIL 17, 1893.—Regular meeting, at the common council room, President Willis in the chair. Letters were read from Hon. Ezra S. Stearns of Rindge, N. H., and Mr. Francis B. Shepley of Boston, accepting corresponding membership.

President Willis read extracts from a rare volume, presented to the society by Charles E. Ware, Esq., it being the report of a commission appointed in 1825 to survey a route for a canal from Boston to the Hudson river. One of several routes considered passed through Fitchburg, following, substantially, the route of the present Hoosac Tunnel line of railroad.



MAY 15, 1893.—Regular monthly meeting, at the office of Superintendent J. G. Edgerly, President Willis in the chair. Messrs. Thomas Mack of Boston, John Simonds of San Francisco, Cal., and Charles W. Bardeen of Syracuse, N. Y., were elected corresponding members; and Mr. Harry G. Morse of Fitchburg was elected to active membership.

Mr. Frederick A. Currier read an interesting and instructive paper on "Postal Communication, Past and Present," including a history of the Fitchburg post-offices.

JUNE 19, 1893.—Regular monthly meeting, at the common council room, Vice President H. A. Goodrich in the chair. The librarian's report mentioned the receipt of a portion of the old communion service of the First Parish Church, placed with this society for safe keeping in accordance with a vote of the parish at its last annual meeting.

Letters accepting corresponding membership were read from Thomas Mack, Esq., of Boston, and Mr. Charles W. Bardeen of Syracuse, N. Y.

Mrs. Ardelia C. Smith, Mrs. Louise H. Wellman and Mr. Irving W. Colburn, of Fitchburg, were elected members of the society.

Mr. Charles Fosdick read from the manuscript journal of Thomas Cowdin, Esq., written while representative from Fitchburg to the General Court, in 1784. This journal, the property of Miss Adelaide Z. McIntire, has been donated to the society.

The secretary read a list of publications, giving the titles of such occasional pamphlets of a local interest as appeared during the first century of the town's corporate existence—a few of which publications are already in the society's collections, and all of which should find their appropriate place there.

SEPTEMBER 18, 1893.—Regular monthly meeting, at the common council room, President Willis in the chair. Miss Adelaide Z. McIntire and Charles F. Baker, Esq., were elected members of the society.

Members of the committee on memorials reported that the granite work for the two monuments to be erected in Fitchburg was in readiness for setting, and that the bronze work, being executed by the Blake Bell Company of Boston, was well under way.

OCTOBER 16, 1893.—Regular monthly meeting, at the common council room, Vice President Goodrich in the chair. Mrs. Margaret P. Snow, Miss Mary E. Jaquith and Mr. William Henry Goodrich, all of Fitchburg, were elected members of the society.

The secretary read a paper in the handwriting of the venerable John Whitcomb, deceased, father of one of Fitchburg's first printers, and formerly a well known citizen of the town. The paper consisted of a series of aphorisms or short, pithy sentences, characteristic of the writer. Gen. Kimball related an anecdote of the same individual in connection with the presidential campaign of 1840, in substance that the villagers were surprised one morning previous to election day to find, on the upper common, a miniature log-cabin, set as a "figure-of-four" trap, and baited with a small keg of hard cider! Later, the fact leaked out that "Uncle John" Whitcomb was the perpetrator.

NOVEMBER 20, 1893.—Regular monthly meeting, at the office of Superintendent Edgerly, President Willis in the chair. Mrs. Harriet F. H. Thompson of Fitchburg was elected a member of the society, and Miss Georgianna A. Boutwell of Groton was elected a corresponding member.

Dr. A. P. Mason read an interesting paper on *The Album, or a Panacea for Ennui*, a magazine published in

Fitchburg in 1831. But one complete set of this magazine is known to be in existence—the one in the Fitchburg Public Library.

A paper was read by the secretary entitled "Fitchburg's Pioneer Printers," consisting of a brief sketch of the careers of Jonathan E. Whitcomb and John Page, publishers of the *Album* and of the *Fitchburg Gazette*, the first newspaper of the town. Copies of the *Gazette* and *Album* were on exhibition.

DECEMBER 18, 1893.—Regular monthly meeting, at the office of Superintendent Edgerly, President Willis in the chair. Among the donations reported by the librarian were manuscript genealogies of the Kimball and Fox families of Fitchburg, and a chart or genealogical tree of the Kimball family.

Rev. George M. Bodge of Leominster was elected a member of the society, and Mr. Samuel S. Crocker, also of Leominster, was elected a corresponding member.

President Willis, of the committee on memorials, announced the completion of two monuments—the one located on Pearl street, and the other on Laurel street—the bronze plates bearing the inscriptions having that day been placed upon the granite.

The president introduced Rev. Mr. Bodge of Leominster, who gave a very interesting account of the ancient "Rogers Bible," so-called, heretofore supposed to have been once owned by John Rogers the martyr. Opportunity was given those present to examine the book, which bears unmistakable evidence of its great age; but Mr. Bodge's researches prove conclusively that it is not, as has been supposed, the bible once owned by the martyr of Smithfield. Positive evidence of this is found by a comparison of the print with that of a copy of the same edition in the British museum, known to have been printed in 1561

—several years subsequent to the death of the martyr. Mr. Bodge's investigations also dispose of the statement that Rev. John Rogers, the first minister of Leominster, was a lineal descendant of the martyr of 1555, as claimed by Rev. Mr. Stebbins in his centennial address, in 1843, and accepted by Mr. Wilder in his History of Leominster, published in 1852.

The thanks of the society were presented to Mr. Bodge for his interesting address.

JANUARY 15, 1894.—The annual meeting of the society was held at the common council room, President Willis in the chair. Mrs. Charlotte L. M. Raymond was elected to membership.

The secretary read his second annual report, reviewing the work of the year, and showing the membership of the society to be sixty-two; of whom sixteen are corresponding and forty-six active and life members.

The librarian submitted his annual report, showing the additions to the society's collections during the year to have been 85 bound volumes, 236 pamphlets, 23 manuscripts, and a collection of newspapers, maps and other material, which, added to the accumulations of the previous year, give a total of 211 bound volumes, 846 pamphlets and 34 manuscripts, besides other material not classified.

The treasurer presented his annual report, showing a balance in the treasury, after the payment of all expenses, of \$203.02.

The following officers were elected:

<i>President,</i>	. . . . .	Henry A. Willis.
<i>Vice Presidents,</i>	. . . . .	{ Henry A. Goodrich.
		{ Frederick F. Woodward.
<i>Secretary,</i>	. . . . .	James F. D. Garfield.
<i>Treasurer and Librarian,</i>		Atherton P. Mason.
<i>Committee on Nominations,</i>	3 years,	Charles E. Ware.

Letters accepting corresponding membership were read from Mr. John Simonds of San Francisco, and Miss Georgianna A. Boutwell of Groton.

Mr. Charles Fosdick read an interesting paper, based on the report of a survey for a canal from Boston to the Hudson river, made by commissioners of the Commonwealth in 1826. He gave copious extracts from the report, tracing the routes surveyed, particularly the one through Fitchburg and the northerly section of the state, and brought out many curious facts in regard to the estimated cost of construction, means proposed for raising funds, and prospective sources of income after its construction.

FEBRUARY 19, 1894.—Regular monthly meeting, at the common council room, President Willis in the chair. William L. Kilburn of Lunenburg was elected to membership.

The secretary read a paper giving a sketch of the life and military record of Capt. Ebenezer Bridge, the leader of the Fitchburg minute men in 1775.

The president called attention to a book containing the autograph signatures of one hundred and forty-seven prominent Fitchburg men, who in 1852 subscribed for the purpose of establishing the Fitchburg Athenæum—an organization whose objects were to maintain a library and provide a course of public lectures annually.

Dr. A. P. Mason read extracts from an old bar-book, kept in 1823 to 1825, at the tavern where now stands the Fitchburg Hotel. The reading gave an insight into the habits of many of the forefathers of this hamlet before the days of the temperance reform movement.

MARCH 19, 1894.—Regular monthly meeting at the common council room. In the absence of the president, Vice-President Goodrich presided.

Dr. Mason read extracts from the record book of the Ashburnham Light Infantry company, dating back to



1813, including a record of the services of the company while on duty for the protection of the sea-coast towns of the commonwealth, in the war of 1812, and from that time onward.

The secretary read a brief sketch of the same company's history, touching upon its war record in 1814, and from that time on, through the war of the rebellion.

Dr. Mason exhibited a subscription paper, containing the names of citizens of Fitchburg who, in 1846, subscribed for the printing of the school report of the town, the voters having refused to have it printed at the town's expense.

APRIL 16, 1894.—Regular monthly meeting at the common council room, President Willis in the chair. Mrs. Louisa C. Upton of Fitchburg and Mrs. Martha E. Crocker of Leominster were elected members of the society.

An interesting paper was read by Ebenezer Bailey on the "Fitchburg Philosophical Society," including an account of the library of that society, and some notice of other libraries in the town, from 1830 to 1837.

The secretary called attention to a communication published in the *Columbian Centinel*, Boston, July 4, 1829, signed "FRANKLIN," proposing a line of railroad from Boston, through Fitchburg, to Vermont. The communication referred to is supposed to have been written by one William Foster, a Boston merchant; and is chiefly interesting as the first public mention known to us of the project of a railroad between Boston and Fitchburg. At that time no railroad for passenger traffic was in operation in this country.

MAY 21, 1894.—Regular monthly meeting at the common council room, President Willis in the chair. Mrs.

Sarah C. Brown and Mrs. Mary L. Fosdick, both of Fitchburg, were elected to membership.

The committee on memorials made the following report, which was accepted:

*To the Officers and Members of the Fitchburg Historical Society:*

The committee appointed at the meeting of this society, June 20, 1892, to consider the subject of marking certain historic sites by permanent monuments, beg leave to submit the following report:

The subject of the proposed monuments was brought to the attention of the city government by a petition from your committee on the 20th of September following their appointment. The city council referred the matter to the committee on education, who granted a hearing to this society, and on the 15th of November following made a report to the council, recommending the erection of three monuments, the expense of the same to be paid by the city, and to be located as follows:

One on Pearl street, near the site of the first settlement in the town—to mark, also, the location of the old tavern where the first town meeting, first school and first religious services were held; one on Laurel street, at the site of the gathering place of the Fitchburg minute men, where they rallied on the morning of the 19th of April, 1775, preparatory to their departure for Concord; and a third in Ashby, at the site of the garrison house of John Fitch, for whom Fitchburg was named, and who, with his family, was captured there by the Indians July 5, 1748; the proposed monuments to be erected within the limits of the highways, to be of granite, with bronze tablets bearing suitable inscriptions, the expense of the same not to exceed two hundred and twenty-five dollars.

After careful investigation it was found by your committee that suitable monuments could not be procured for the sum named; and on the 4th of April, 1893, a petition was presented to the city government for a larger appropriation, which was granted, the limit of cost being raised to five hundred dollars.

\* \* \* \* \*

Contracts were made with Daniel O'Connor of Fitchburg for the granite work for the three monuments, and with the Blake Bell Company of Boston for the bronze plates bearing the inscriptions.

The stone work for the monument on Laurel street was set November 1st of last year, that on Pearl street immediately afterwards, the bronze tablets for the two being placed in position on the 8th of December last.

The Laurel street monument has the following inscription:

“Near this spot, in 1775, stood the store of  
EPHRAIM KIMBALL.

It was the rendezvous of Fitchburg's minute men.  
Here, at nine o'clock, A. M., on the 19th of April, 1775, the alarm gun  
was fired, and a company of forty-two men under  
CAPT. EBENEZER BRIDGE,  
marched for Concord, where they arrived the same evening. Another  
company, under CAPT. EBENEZER WOODS, followed  
the same day.”

The inscription at Pearl street reads as follows:

“Near this spot, about the year 1730,  
the first settler of Fitchburg, DAVID PAGE, built a garrison house,  
in which he lived for several years.

Here, in 1761,  
the first public house was opened by SAMUEL HUNT. In this tavern  
were held, in 1764,  
the first town meeting, first public religious services, and the  
first public school.”

The stone for the Fitch memorial was not ready to set before the  
closing in of winter, and consequently was left to be completed this  
spring. It was placed in position on the 3d of the present month, and  
was completed on the 8th by the addition of the bronze plate. It  
bears the following inscription:

“Near this spot was the residence and garrison of  
JOHN FITCH,

For whom Fitchburg was named.

On the 5th of July, 1748, he was attacked by Indians,  
and after a hot fight, in which the two soldiers with him were killed,  
he was captured, with his whole family, and  
his dwelling burned.

All were taken to Canada, where they were held about one year  
and then ransomed.

This land, at that time a portion of Lunenburg, and afterward a part  
of Fitchburg, was later set off to Ashby.

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Erected by the city of Fitchburg, 1893.”

While the monuments have been erected under the sanction of the city government, and at the expense of the city, the details and care of the work have been left wholly to the discretion and judgment of this society. The monuments are five to six feet in height, the one in Ashby being considerably the largest; but all are similar in design, each consisting of a heavy tablet of Rollstone granite, resting on a base of the same material, with inscription in bronze.

By agreement of the city authorities with the selectmen of Ashby, the Fitch monument is to be cared for by the authorities of the town of Ashby perpetually, in accordance with the following communication on file with the city clerk:

ASHBY, Sept. 20, 1893.

"We, the undersigned, selectmen of the town of Ashby, hereby authorize the city of Fitchburg to erect at the junction of the South Ashburnham road and the road leading to Mill Village, near the residence of the late Paul Gates, a stone monument to commemorate John Fitch, for whom the city of Fitchburg was named, and who formerly resided on this spot; the said monument to be placed just within the limits of the highway, at some point to be hereafter agreed upon by the board of selectmen and the committee on education of the city of Fitchburg; it being understood that it is thereafter to be cared for by the authorities of the town of Ashby perpetually."

[Signed]

FRANCIS W. WRIGHT,	} <i>Selectmen of Ashby.</i>
HORACE S. BROOKS,	
C. C. DAMON,	

The three monuments have been erected at a cost slightly under the limit of the appropriation named by the city, and are substantial and durable memorials, every way suitable for the purpose for which they are designed.

Respectfully submitted,

H. A. WILLIS,	} <i>Committee.</i>
H. A. GOODRICH,	
ATHERTON P. MASON,	
JOHN W. KIMBALL,	
J. F. D. GARFIELD,	

A committee was appointed to make arrangements for holding dedicatory exercises at the Fitch monument, on the approaching anniversary of the capture. The committee was instructed to invite Hon. Ezra S. Stearns, secretary of state of New Hampshire—a lineal descendant

of John Fitch—to deliver an historical address on the occasion.

Dr. A. P. Mason read an interesting paper on the Fitchburg Athenæum, tracing the history of that institution from its organization in October, 1852, to its termination in 1859, when its library was purchased by the town of Fitchburg as a foundation for the Fitchburg public library.

JUNE 18, 1894.—Regular monthly meeting at the common council room, President Willis in the chair. Mrs. M. C. Crocker and J. Frank Fisher of Fitchburg were elected members of the society.

The committee in charge of arrangements for the dedication of the Fitch memorial tablet reported the following as the order of exercises for that occasion:

1, Introductory Address; 2, Invocation; 3, Presentation of the Tablet to the town of Ashby; 4, Acceptance of the Tablet by the town of Ashby; 5, Address by Hon. Ezra S. Stearns.

Mrs. Martha E. Crocker of Leominster read a paper on "The Fugitive Slave Law and its Workings," comprising an interesting account of the operation of the underground railroad in aiding fugitives in their flight from bondage to freedom.

Samuel S. Crocker also gave interesting reminiscences of his connection with the underground road in passing fugitive slaves on their way to Canada.

JULY 4, 1894.—The proposed program for the dedication of the Fitch monument, in Ashby, was successfully carried out on the 4th of July, under the direction of this society. An account of the exercises, with the addresses in full, will be found at the close of this volume.

## THE EARLY DAYS OF RAILROADS IN FITCHBURG.

*Read at the Meeting of the Society, April 18, 1892.*

BY HENRY A. WILLIS.

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The earliest record we find of a movement for a railroad to connect Fitchburg with Boston is in the year 1837, at which time a meeting was held here and a committee chosen to make a survey and report upon a plan for connecting Fitchburg with the Boston and Worcester railroad at Framingham, and eventually continuing the route west to the Connecticut river. Surveys were made and a very favorable report presented at a subsequent meeting, and a committee chosen and instructed to prepare and circulate a petition to present to the Legislature for a charter. But for some reason the project was delayed and for the time being allowed to drop.\*

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\*It is worthy of note, however, that this was not the first agitation of the project of railroad-building through this part of the country. In the *Columbian Centinel*, published in Boston, of date of July 4, 1829, there was a communication signed "Franklin," stating that "a number of respectable citizens of the commonwealth proposed to unite with the various towns to construct a railroad from Boston" to Brattleboro', through "Watertown, Waltham, Weston, Sudbury, Stow, Bolton, Lancaster, Leominster, Fitchburg, Westminster, Gardner, and such other towns" as might be included on the line, and it was expected that land-owners along the route would give land five rods wide through which it might pass.

The project never materialized, however, and is only mentioned here to show that even before a single steam railroad was constructed in the United States this route was thought desirable and practicable, and as a matter of fact it was essentially covered when the Fitchburg and Vermont and Massachusetts railroads came to be built.

Early in 1841 we find in the *Sentinel* an abstract of reports of the several railroads then running in the state, all of which had been constructed during the previous ten years, giving net results of their business for the year 1840. The Boston and Worcester had paid seven per cent. dividends, the Boston and Lowell five per cent., the Boston and Providence seven per cent., the Nashua and Lowell seven and one-half per cent., the Boston and Portland six and one-half per cent., and the Western railroad (Worcester to Springfield and Albany) was in process of construction.

Public interest was again awakened, but no definite action looking to a renewal of the project was taken until late in the year.

Fitchburg was even then an ambitious town, and dreams of a great future were indulged in. Its population in 1820 was 1,736, in 1830, 2,169, and in 1840, 2,604, showing a very healthy growth for those days. Its water power and other facilities were unequalled by any of the towns in this vicinity, all of which began to look upon this place as a future business centre. It was very natural that its people should be seeking for as good communication with the seaboard as had Lowell and Worcester, and the failure of the project of 1837 had but temporarily checked its enterprise in this direction.

The following is an account of the inception of the Fitchburg railroad enterprise. The notice of the first meeting is as follows:

“RAILROAD MEETING.

“The citizens of Fitchburg who feel an interest in the subject of a railroad from this place to the city of Boston are requested to meet at the Town Hall on Friday evening, Nov. 19, 1841, at half-past six o'clock, to adopt such measures as they may think proper.”

The origin of this meeting is as follows, as told by W. S. Wilder, at that time editor of the *Fitchburg Sentinel*:

"This notice, written by William B. Town, originated thus: One evening in our reading room, present Alvah Crocker, Horace Newton, Samuel Willis, Abial J. Town, the conversation was on the project of a county road being laid out, passing through the south part of this town, from Winchendon to Leominster. It was proposed to push for a railroad, directly, to avoid the diversion of travel from Fitchburg centre. Newton and Crocker expressed no faith in the project. Crocker referred to the failure in attempting to get a road to Framingham, and was discouraged. I told him if he would write a notice for a meeting, I would publish it. He refused, and so did Newton. No one present had confidence in the success of a railroad being built, or at least none was expressed, and the most said in favor of calling the meeting was that it might lead to a prevention of laying out the proposed southern road by the commissioners. It was said if a railroad was ever built from Fitchburg to Boston the southern road would be useless, and would cost the town several thousand dollars. Newton (then one of the Selectmen) was very anxious to avoid this."

It appears that William B. Town was induced by some one to write the above notice and a meeting was held as called, at which Francis Perkins was chairman and Jacob Haskell secretary. The meeting resulted in the choice of a "Committee of Correspondence and Enquiry," to report at some future meeting, consisting of Alvah Crocker, Samuel Willis, John T. Farwell, Alpheus Kimball and Abial J. Town. A committee to collect statistical information upon the tonnage carried from and brought to this place was chosen as follows: Levi Pratt, Porter Piper and Abial J. Town. In the account of this meeting, the editor, W. S. Wilder, indulges in the following comments. I give the article in full, as it shows some of the objections urged by the people of this rural town, and it also shows that even in those days the *Sentinel* was progressive and fully in accord with the march of improvement.

"From the apparent interest which many of our citizens have taken in relation to this subject, and the known feasibility of a route direct to the city, we are led to believe that the day is not far distant when this new and desirable measure shall have been completed. The only obsta-



cles in the way, of any importance, calculated to defeat the object, are the strong prejudices existing in the minds of many against all railroads, and particularly among the agriculturalists, who fear that a reduction of price must necessarily take place in the usual products of the farm wherever this mode of transportation is introduced; the opposition which will undoubtedly be experienced from the two corporations, one upon each side of the contemplated route, now in successful operation; and the amount of stock required to be taken up. To these may be added the opinions entertained by many who are fully aware of the dangerous tendencies of increasing the wealth and power of privileged corporations. So far as the farming interests are concerned, any considerable opposition from this source must, we think, rise from mistaken views. It cannot be reasonably supposed that the various kinds of produce from any farm can long command a higher price in Fitchburg or its immediate vicinity than it will in Boston, Worcester or Lowell. and it must be obvious to all that the convenience of a railroad communication will open a market for many kinds of produce which are now unprofitable, only for the want of a cheap, easy and quick transportation to the city. Should any opposition arise from the present established corporations, we hope that a sense of justice and equal rights may so far prevail among them as to neutralize its effects. And in order to secure the necessary amount of stock, it only needs to be shown, as we believe it can be shown to a demonstration, that investments in this undertaking can be made perfectly safe, and highly profitable. As to the dangers of privileged corporations, so long as they exist, and must necessarily continue to exist in this country, the greater danger is to be apprehended from a small number with superior advantage, rather than many, equally accessible, and judiciously established throughout the country. We shall therefore go for a railroad from Fitchburg to Boston. And we venture to predict that if our citizens are not blind to their interests, they will unite in the effort now to be made in securing the privileges of a railroad; and if this is not done, if the object is not in some way accomplished, ere many years shall roll round the wheel of time, the car wheels of other routes will roll away with the interests of our citizens, in despite of the present thriving appearance of our village, its excellent water privileges, its ample resources of business and its inexhaustible Rollstone."

On the twentieth of December an adjourned meeting was held to hear a report from its "Committee of Correspondence and Enquiry," and was fully attended. The

action of the citizens, already taken, had become noised abroad and much interest manifested in the subject by the people of the towns along the proposed route, notably at Concord and Waltham. I find a vigorous editorial in the Concord *Freeman*, manifesting great concern lest the proposed road should be connected with the Lowell road (thirty miles distant), or the Worcester road (twenty-four miles distant), and thus they might be "left out in the cold."

At the adjourned meeting above referred to, the committee reported the results of their visits to the various towns, and it was voted that this committee be instructed to call a convention of delegates from the various towns interested, which they did, as follows:

\* \* "In pursuance of this trust we have appointed Tuesday, the eleventh day of January, 1842, at nine o'clock a. m., at the Massasoit House in Waltham, when and where you are cordially invited to attend; and also to take such measures as shall insure your town full representation at said meeting. Some of the topics for discussion will be

"1st. Shall this large and populous section of country now reaping no benefit from steam communication, but positive injury, unite to restore our business and travel to its accustomed channels?

"2d. If the convention shall accept the affirmative of this question, shall such measures be taken as will carry the object into speedy effect?

"3d. Shall we unite with the Fresh Pond railroad,\* so called, now built within about four miles of Waltham, and if so, take such action as will secure its immediate accomplishment?

"Delegates are earnestly requested to come prepared to state, as near as possible, the number of passengers and the amount of tonnage both from and to their respective towns, from and to the city of Boston, the probable cost per annum for these two items to each town, the natural resources (water power, etc.) for increase of business by increased facil-

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\*The Fresh Pond railroad, from Charlestown to Fresh Pond in Cambridge, was completed in December, 1841, and the *Bunker Hill Aurora* announces the arrival of the first train, "loaded with last year's ice," and that it was drawn by a locomotive until it reached the crossing of the streets. This was subsequently purchased by the Fitchburg railroad and a portion of it taken into the main line.

ities, together with such statistics as will not only add a deep and abiding interest to the occasion, but form an invaluable material for future use.

"We have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servants,

"A. CROCKER,

"A. J. TOWN,

"SAMUEL WILLIS,

"A. KIMBALL,

"J. T. FARWELL."

The following were chosen delegates to represent this town: Alvah Crocker, A. J. Town, Samuel Willis, Alpheus Kimball, John T. Farwell, Francis Perkins, David Boutillette, Isaiah Putnam, Porter Piper, Nathaniel Wood, C. Marshall and Jacob Haskell.

The report of this meeting in the *Sentinel* was accompanied by another vigorous editorial in favor of the project.

The convention was held according to the notice, January 11th, 1842. About one hundred delegates were present from the various towns along the proposed route. Mr. John Rogers of Concord presided, with three vice-presidents and two secretaries. Mr. Crocker addressed the meeting, alluding to the primary measures adopted at Fitchburg resulting in the calling of the convention, and calling attention to the feasibility and advantages of an independent route, instead of a route from Fitchburg to connect with the Worcester or Lowell road as had been contemplated in the project of some four or five years before. Dr. Abraham T. Lowe of Boston, at that time a director in the Western railroad, and who has lately died at the age of ninety-three, addressed the convention at considerable length, giving much encouragement by his remarks. Gen. Dana of Charlestown and others addressed the convention with good effect. The practical results of the convention were the choosing of committees, as follows:

A Committee on Survey, composed of Samuel M. Felton of Charlestown, Samuel Willis of Fitchburg, W. E. Faulkner of Acton, Israel Longley of Shirley, and thirteen others from the various towns between Fitchburg and Boston.

A Committee on Statistics, composed of Alvah Crocker of Fitchburg, Salma Hale of Keene, Ebenezer Hobbs of Waltham, David Loring of Concord and Joseph Davis of Templeton.

Also a committee to confer with the directors of the Charlestown branch, Fresh Pond railroad, and to petition the legislature for a charter, if they thought best, as follows: Alvah Crocker of Fitchburg, N. F. Cunningham of Boston, F. R. Gourgas of Concord, Abel Phelps of Boston. The last committee was also empowered to propose resolutions and publish the proceedings of the convention.

This committee subsequently reported the following resolutions, which are given in full, as they are rather unique in composition and show great earnestness of purpose:

*"Resolved,* That the success which has hitherto crowned railroad enterprise in every section of this Commonwealth now sheds its beacon light upon us, and stimulates us to prompt and efficient action to obtain the same glorious results for ourselves that others now enjoy.

*"Resolved,* That while we regard with the highest satisfaction the increasing wealth and prosperity incident upon the establishment of our great railroad thoroughfares in New England, both to our own city of Boston and those sections of country through which they pass, while our lively sympathies and willing aid have been afforded toward the completion of those noble works, common justice would seem to indicate that others, who now enjoy such additional facilities, should also accord to us their sympathy and aid.

*"Resolved,* That while we are determined (should a charter be obtained) to build a road inferior to none in durability and care in the construction, an imperious sense of duty demands a rigid economy; and in consequence of the extreme feasibility of the route, the public have a right to ask and expect a moderate tariff, not only for passengers and tonnage, but also for branch roads which may enter upon our track.

"*Resolved*, That while the Western railroad must ever be the great outlet to the fertile and almost inexhaustless West; while the Lowell and Concord road now commands and must ever command an immense business on the east side of the Monadnock, Kearsarge and Franconia Ridge, the God of Nature has marked and established, by metes and bounds not to be misunderstood, a direct river route, not to Keene and Brattleboro', but following the upper Connecticut and other streams to Whitehall and Montreal.

"*Resolved*, That this route, almost precisely intermediate between Lowell and Worcester roads, is the consummation of the routes essentially necessary for the northern country and Boston—the direct route, when finished, for the travel from our Atlantic steamers to Montreal; and that this first section to Fitchburg is a germ which will ultimate in such fruition."

These committees got immediately to work, and I also find that stock subscriptions were made at once, in advance of any charter being authorized. At Concord, a rousing meeting was held February 5, 1842, and a committee chosen to procure stock, who reported a few days later a subscription of \$48,000, all from Concord citizens. On the 12th and 14th of February meetings were held in Fitchburg and Waltham, and stock subscriptions opened. At the latter place liberal subscriptions were made; but I conclude from a manuscript letter of February 11, 1842, now in my possession, from Samuel Willis to Alvah Crocker, then a member of the legislature, that there was much apathy existing here on the subject, owing, the letter states, to the fact of the uncertainty as to where the railroad was to terminate. The sectional feeling between "Old City" and "Up Town" was very pronounced in those days, as we shall see further on. The letter was an urgent appeal to Mr. Crocker to leave his legislative duties and come up and address the people, which he probably did. On the 21st of February, 1842, a public meeting was held at Charlestown, at which it was resolved that "We hail with joy the prospect of bringing

to this town the terminus of the contemplated railroad from Fitchburg," and a committee of nine was chosen to solicit subscriptions to the stock.

On the 2d of March, 1842, the bill for the incorporation of the Fitchburg Railroad Company was passed to be engrossed. After this date the work of the committees was very vigorously pushed, and reports were made at a meeting held at the Fitchburg Hotel, June 27, 1842, at which meeting it was voted that the persons named in the act of incorporation be requested to call a meeting of the subscribers to the stock, to be held at Concord on July 13, 1842, "to determine on the acceptance of the act of incorporation, to elect directors, adopt by-laws, etc." This meeting was accordingly called by A. Crocker and N. F. Cunningham.

The meeting at Concord was held pursuant to notice, and was presided over by Hon. Samuel Hoar of Concord. The "Act" was accepted, by-laws adopted, and the following were unanimously elected as the first Board of Directors: Alvah Crocker of Fitchburg, Samuel Willis of Fitchburg, David Wilder of Leominster, W. E. Faulkner of Acton, Israel Longley of Shirley, David Loring of Concord, Horatio Adams of Waltham, Nathan Pratt of Charlestown, Benjamin Thompson of Waltham, N. F. Cunningham, Luke Carter and E. H. Derby, of Boston. It is recorded that gentlemen were present from nearly every town along the route, and that the utmost harmony and good feeling prevailed.

From this time on during the year 1842, I find that interest was not allowed to lag. Meetings were held and the subscription list pushed. The local papers along the route teemed with editorials in favor of the project. There appeared to be no public opposition.

A lengthy communication in the *Sentinel* of Sept. 16, 1842, with about every other sentence in italics, signed

"C.," is so characteristic of its probable author that I transcribe its closing paragraph.

"*Mr. Editor:*—I am aware that I am somewhat lengthy, but our present legislative session reminds me of the political bearing of this and enterprises of a similar character, a word upon which and I close. New England has heretofore sustained a commanding influence in this great republic. Her district schools, her colleges of learning, and her exalted moral principles have diffused abroad their rich and varied blessings. To promote and increase their influence we must secure to ourselves every possible means of sustaining a dense population by industry and the arts, and should regard our physical as well as intellectual energies. Let these grow tame and dead and the very smallness of our territory will sink us into insignificance. Let New England influences cease upon this nation, and the abstract vagaries of southern nullification, the pestilential miasma of corrupting, licentious slavery will ring the death knell of a structure of human government, beautiful for its symmetry and hallowed for its sacred regard for the unfettered, untrammelled freedom of mankind."

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Mr. Crocker was, indeed, indefatigable. We find him addressing meetings in Boston, Charlestown, Greenfield, Keene and Brattleboro', and he seemed to be the foremost man in the undertaking. He had also a good number of coadjutors who were scouring the country for subscriptions. Among these may be prominently mentioned, Samuel Willis of Fitchburg, W. E. Faulkner of Acton, Israel Longley of Shirley, David Loring of Concord, and E. H. Derby of Boston. But it was not until the spring of 1843 that sufficient stock was secured to warrant the commencing of work, at which time twenty-seven miles of the road was put under contract, and the work finally began May 15, 1843. The first assessment of ten per cent. was made, payable May 25, 1843.

On the 1st of August Mr. Crocker and E. H. Derby of Boston sailed for England to purchase iron rails for the road. They returned about October 1st, having purchased four thousand tons, in addition to those already

purchased. It appears that they bought at a favorable time, as an advance of six dollars per ton took place thirty days after. On December 20th the road was opened to Waltham; fare, twenty cents, or twenty-five cents including omnibus transfer to Brattle street.

The capital subscribed thus far was \$750,000. The company bought about twenty acres of land for terminal facilities, with two thousand feet of water front. This seemed to be a large tract at that time, but has since proved far too small, and much has been added.

During the year great interest in railroads was manifested everywhere. We find meetings being held at Brattleboro' and Greenfield, to consider a line west from Fitchburg; and at Keene, Bellows Falls and Rutland, in the interest of a northern route to Burlington. Also, at Nashua in favor of a line to South Groton, to connect with the Fitchburg railroad.

Early in 1844 the agitation for a depot location in this city commenced. A most exciting controversy followed during the next few months, the effect of which was felt for years.

To fully understand the merits of this controversy, it should be remembered that what constituted the principal village of Fitchburg, at that time, was situated above what is now known as Newton place. Both the hotels, nearly all the stores and other business locations, were above this point. From the house of Dr. Boutelle, where is now the office of the Fitchburg Gas company, corner of Main and Grove streets, to the Fox house, where the opera house stands, corner of Main and Prichard streets, there were but one or two buildings on the north side of the street; while on the other side, from the point of residence of Mrs. Alvah Crocker, at the corner of Main street and Wood place, to what is now Putnam street, there were but six houses, five of which are standing to-day.



The territory now bounded by Grove, Prichard and Main streets was vacant land; and all the land in the rear, to the top of the hill at Mt. Globe and Mt. Vernon streets, was bare of buildings and partly covered with forests. At what was known as the "Old City" was one store, a blacksmith's shop, the stone cotton-mill and the boarding-houses attached thereto, also a sash and blind shop, on the site of the present Canal block. Below the David Boutelle house, opposite the depot, and in the territory now bounded by Blossom, Pearl, Pacific, Lunenburg and Main streets, there were no buildings. There was a school-house, and perhaps six or eight dwellings, on the west side of Blossom street; no hotel or church. The land, from what is now Railroad park to the river, was practically bare.

The charter read (in relation to location) "to a certain point of land owned by Samuel Hale, thence to some point in the village of Fitchburg which shall best accommodate the people." The land of Samuel Hale, referred to, was beyond the river, and where the gas works are now located. Mr. Crocker, the president of the road, unfortunately, perhaps, owned the most of the land now bounded by Water, Main and Summer streets and the river, and known as "Burbank flat."

A committee of directors (of which Mr. Crocker was not one) was chosen to locate the depot, and, after several weeks' consideration, located it on this tract. I find, about this date, most bitter and sarcastic editorials and letters of great length in the weekly *Sentinel*. A very lengthy report was made by the committee, E. H. Derby and H. Adams, justifying their action, and accompanied by a report of the engineer, in which he gives comparative estimates of the expense of reaching different locations suggested. This latter closes as follows:

"The Fox lot is insufficient for the accommodation of both roads [meaning the proposed road west] and too far above their probable juncture. The lot at the 'Old City' is very accessible and as we think sufficiently central for the accommodation of business; of ample area to allow of any enlargement with the probable increase of business; and by its adoption a probable saving of twenty-five thousand dollars may be secured to this corporation. With these views, I cannot hesitate to give my opinion in favor of its selection, as containing more advantages for a common terminus than any other of the proposed sites."

The "Fox lot" referred to was the land now bounded by Grove, Prichard, Oliver and Main streets. I think another lot proposed was the land now occupied for the west railroad yard, beyond the Priest Lumber Company location. The committee received a long and somewhat spicy remonstrance from the citizens, and gave them a patient hearing before making their final decision. Their indignation knew no bounds. They charged that "Mr. Crocker has unduly influenced the board of directors to buy his twenty acres of land for six thousand dollars; that forty feet had been lost in the grade from Leominster, to get down to his land." A petition, signed by three hundred and ten legal voters, was actually presented to the legislature, "to be incorporated for the purpose of constructing a railroad to connect the village of Fitchburg with the Fitchburg railroad." The newspaper discussion went on for many weeks, and is very spicy reading at the present day. I have been told that most of the principal stockholders here threw their stock upon the market and sold out, depreciating the same considerably below par, and that at the completion of the road scarcely any of the stock was held in Fitchburg. Mr. Crocker suffered severely from the episode, and the feeling engendered lasted for years. But who can say, at the present day, that the directors made any mistake in their location? Where could twenty acres have been bought that would so completely have served the purpose, as that which was secured? We

certainly have to be thankful that the Fox flat, now occupied by the court house, armory, monument and churches, was not destined to become the terminus of a railroad, with all which it implies. From this time forward there was very little excitement here concerning the railroad. The work silently progressed. The road was opened to Waltham, December 20, 1843; to Concord, June 17, 1844; to Acton, October 1, 1844; to Shirley, December 30, 1844; and to Fitchburg, March 5, 1845. The opening of the road was not the occasion of any great demonstration. The following from the *Sentinel* of March 7, 1845, is its only account of the opening:

"FITCHBURG RAILROAD.

"The passenger cars arrived at the depot in this town on Wednesday morning for the first time, bringing the officers of the corporation. The officers were greeted on their arrival by a committee of reception and by citizens, and were addressed by Col. I. Phillips, and in reply in their behalf by A. Crocker, Esq., president of the board. The passenger trains now run regular, leaving at 6½ and 10 o'clock A. M. and 4½ P. M. Freight trains run daily."

The "depot fight" had taken all the enthusiasm out of the people. The *Sentinel* appears to have turned the cold shoulder, for in the next succeeding weeks I find not the slightest allusion to the railroad, except the following in its advertising columns:

"FITCHBURG RAILROAD OPENED THROUGH TO FITCHBURG.

"On and after Wednesday, March 5th, and until further notice, passenger trains will run over the Fitchburg railroad as follows:

"Up trains, leave Charlestown at 7 A. M., 1½ and 5 P. M.

"Down trains, leave Fitchburg at 6½ and 10 A. M. and 4½ P. M.

"A freight train will run both ways over the road daily.

"S. M. FELTON, Engineer.

"March 3, 1845."

But I find in the *Bunker Hill Aurora*, of March 8, 1845, an extensive two-column account of the "opening," from which some extracts are here given:

"The train bearing the directors and some of the stockholders left Charlestown at 7 A. M., and received demonstrations of welcome at various points along the route, especially at Leominster, where there was a general turnout of the people, with flags and banners waving, and a welcoming salute of artillery. At Fitchburg several hundred people were found, and cheers on cheers welcomed the new visitors. The Fitchburg band had been engaged for the occasion, and they added their fine music to the general joy which the event inspired.

"Col. Phillips of Fitchburg, in behalf of the citizens, addressed the president and board of directors of the road, and gave them a welcome to the town. He spoke particularly of the enterprise and the discouraging circumstances under which it had been commenced; the obstacles and difficulties it had to encounter, and its completion and final triumphant success against all opposition. He complimented Mr. Crocker for his unwearied exertions and his indefatigable zeal in the work, from its first commencement to its completion, and thought that the success which had crowned the labor would compensate for the obstacles overcome. His remarks were received with applause and approbation, and the people assembled seemed to feel and appreciate the truth of them.

"Mr. Crocker, president of the road, made a brief reply, in which he expressed the unexpected pleasure this spontaneous reception of the first passenger train into Fitchburg had afforded him. He spoke of some of the difficulties which the company had to encounter, and of the gratification which so large a degree of success as the company had met was calculated to inspire. His allusions to more local questions were delicate and proper; and in respect to the location of the depot at Fitchburg, being himself a resident of the town, and not wishing to exert any influence over that matter, he had left the determination of it entirely to the directors, not one of them knowing his views until after the question was decided. He said he hoped to have an opportunity before long of affording to the citizens of Fitchburg an opportunity to test the facilities of the road, and also of expressing himself more at length, than he could do on this occasion, on the subject of its construction and completion.

"Mr. N. F. Cunningham, one of the directors, having invited his associates and a few friends to his residence in Lunenburg, carriages were provided and they repaired thither (about five miles from the Fitchburg depot). Mr. Cunningham entertained his guests in a most sumptuous and elegant manner; and enough was seen of Lunenburg to enable us to say that under more auspicious circumstances this pleasant and delightful town would afford as many attractions of fine scenery and beautiful location as any other town in the state.

"Returning to the depot, the train left at 4.30, and arrived at Charlestown at 7 o'clock; and although the weather was exceedingly unfavorable, we believe we may say that the gentlemen were highly pleased and gratified with their excursion, more especially with the trip to Lunenburg. The moist atmosphere of the day seemed not to dampen the spirits or check the flow of wit and cheerful good humor which commenced with starting and continued to the return."

The article continues: "We have so far refrained from mentioning the efforts and labor of Alvah Crocker, Esquire, of Fitchburg, the well known and indefatigable president of the company,—the sole projector and father of the Fitchburg railroad. In the commencement of this great enterprise Mr. Crocker stood alone; and amid every vicissitude and every species of discouragement he pressed forward with indomitable zeal in his favorite project. Nothing could check his enterprise and no combination of circumstances cool his zeal. The opposition of interested parties, the lukewarmness of friends and the chilling taunts of some, only had the effect to draw out his energies in the labor of his heart; and the time has now come when he may look with delight and high satisfaction upon the completion, so far, of his great enterprise. The most triumphant success in the undertaking is now apparent; and the necessity for the road, and the business and travel which he foresaw justified and demanded it, are now made manifest and are now securing to the stockholders the result of a wise and judicious investment of their money.

"The efforts of Mr. Crocker over the entire line of the road (in which we believe he addressed more than one hundred meetings of the people), as well as his other services out and in the board of directors, have been such as few other men could have performed; and the purity of motive and the singleness of heart in which Mr. Crocker went into this work and pressed it to such eminent success, are equally creditable to his public spirit and to his patriotism.

"It is undoubtedly due to the board of directors to say, that from the first, Mr. Crocker has possessed their entire confidence, and they have never failed to give him, in every emergency, their prompt and cordial support; and it is but justice to him to add that they have found no occasion to regret this course, nor any cause to doubt his sagacity and the correctness of his proceedings.

"We have occupied more space in these remarks than we intended, and we may add that they rest altogether upon our own responsibility. We have not made them to minister to any morbid sensibility on the part of the gentleman named, nor for any other reason whatever than the simple one that we know them to be true and deserved."

This tribute to Mr. Crocker was undoubtedly well merited, and I doubt not would have found public expression in Fitchburg at the time but for the unfortunate depot episode heretofore alluded to.

The capital of the company, at the completion of the road in the spring of 1845, was \$1,322,500. The length of the road was forty-nine and one-fourth miles, which was built at a cost of about \$23,000 per mile; the whole work being done by S. F. Belknap, under contract, he supplying all material except the rails. S. M. Felton was the chief engineer, and afterwards the first superintendent of the road. It was built during a period of financial depression, when money was, for a portion of the time, worth one to two per cent. a month; but it was built entirely from subscriptions, and with no state aid, as the Western railroad had received.

It is recorded that during its construction "the company never borrowed a dollar, never gave a note, nor had a lawsuit, and met with no accident of any account." It was essentially a Fitchburg enterprise, having its inception here, and carried on to completion largely through the efforts of Fitchburg men, while its capital was largely furnished by the people of the towns along the line and not by the capitalists of Boston.

Upon its completion, it immediately entered upon a most prosperous career. Its first dividend was paid in August, 1845, at the rate of eight per cent. per annum. In 1846 it paid ten per cent., 1847, ten per cent., 1848, nine and one-half per cent., 1849, eight per cent., 1850, eight per cent. January 1, 1850, its capital stood at \$2,650,000.

Its history from that time to the present it is not my purpose to give in this paper. Suffice it to say, that it has progressed and developed with the ever-increasing demands of a growing country, and has always had an

honest management. It has absorbed other lines and become one of the great arteries along which courses the tide of business from the seaboard to the country's utmost limit.

From a million and a quarter capital, no debt, and fifty miles of track at the beginning, it has increased to the present capital of \$22,164,300—and a bonded debt and guaranteed stock of lines it has absorbed, of \$25,042,600—and 436 miles of track.

Commencing with three passenger trains and one freight train each way, daily, it has increased to thirteen passenger and over twenty freight trains, daily, in each direction.

The Vermont and Massachusetts railroad was the next road, having a terminus in Fitchburg, to be built.

In November, 1843, a circular signed by prominent citizens of Athol, Greenfield, Northfield, Vernon, Brattleboro', Putney, Newfane and Royalston, was issued, calling a convention of all interested in the "extension of the Boston and Fitchburg railroad to Brattleboro', Lake Champlain and Canada, to meet in Brattleboro' on Tuesday, December 5, 1843, to devise and execute measures to effect the same."

Singularly enough, no one from Fitchburg appears to have signed the call. The meeting was held as called, and about one thousand delegates were present. Committees were chosen, resolutions adopted, and an adjournment made to Athol for December 21, 1843, where the work was thoroughly organized.

The means taken to arouse public interest along the route, and to secure subscriptions, were much the same as in the case of the Fitchburg railroad; and Alvah Crocker again seemed to be the moving spirit of the enterprise.

An act of the legislature of Vermont to incorporate the Brattleboro' and Fitchburg railroad company was passed in October, 1843, and an act of the legislature of Massachusetts to incorporate the Vermont and Massachusetts railroad company was passed March 15, 1844. Both of these had provisions for the union of the two companies, which was afterward effected, and the company organized as the Vermont and Massachusetts railroad company in November, 1844, and the following directors chosen: Nathan Rice, Thomas Lamb, Isaac Livermore, John J. Low, Jacob Foster, Joseph Goodhue, Henry Timmins, Joseph Davis, H. W. Fuller, Calvin Townsley, Alvah Crocker, Gardner C. Hall, John R. Blake. Nathan Rice was the first president, F. W. Buckingham clerk, and John Rogers treasurer. Alvah Crocker became its president in 1845, and continued to serve until the road was completed.

Work was commenced in September, 1845. The road was opened to Baldwinville, September, 1847; to Athol, January, 1848; to Montague, December, 1848; and to Brattleboro', February 12, 1849.

This company was not a financial success for many years, but was destined, ultimately, to become an important factor in the great line of which the Hoosac Tunnel was the greatest feature. It continued to operate its line until 1874, when it was consolidated with the Fitchburg railroad by a lease for nine hundred and ninety-nine years, executed on the seventh of January, 1874.

The Cheshire railroad, connecting Fitchburg and Belows Falls, making a junction with the Vermont and Massachusetts railroad at South Ashburnham, was first projected in 1843, by a circular issued and dated December 12, 1843, signed by well known citizens of Fitzwilliam, Keene, Westmoreland, Walpole, Troy, Marlboro' and Gilsum, calling a meeting at Keene, December 27, 1843.



The convention was held and great enthusiasm prevailed. An organization was fully effected, by the appointment of various committees, and in the fall of 1844 a charter was obtained from the legislature of New Hampshire, and one from the Massachusetts legislature the following winter.

In March, 1845, stock subscription lists were opened, and in two months there had been subscribed \$1,180,000, being \$180,000 in excess of the amount authorized by the charter.

The company was organized, and the following officers chosen: President, Thomas M. Edwards; clerk, Salma Hale; treasurer, C. J. Everett; directors, Thomas M. Edwards, Abel Phelps, Salma Hale, Benjamin F. Adams, Thomas Thatcher, Hiram Hosmer, Ephraim Murdock, Jr.

Work was commenced late in that year, or early in 1846, and the road was opened to Keene, May 16, 1848, and to Bellows Falls, January 1, 1849.

The road built up a fine business, and eventually became a very profitable investment to the stockholders. It finally became a part of the Fitchburg system, about two years ago.

The Fitchburg and Worcester railroad was more essentially a Fitchburg enterprise. It was to connect two towns having very intimate relations, Worcester being the county town. Hence we find Fitchburg men more definitely connected with it. Among them may be named Ivers Phillips, Francis Perkins and Nathaniel Wood.

It was a short line of fourteen miles, simply connecting Fitchburg with the Worcester and Nashua railroad at Sterling, and was to be run in connection with that line. At an interview which I had with Col. Phillips, last fall, I obtained the following facts, which I will give in his own words:

"The railroad was organized in 1847. It was started under the auspices of Dr. Charles W. Wilder of Leominster, who was the first president of the company.

"They raised money so that they graded the road, bargained for the rails, and then found themselves out of money. The rails arrived and the doctor was discouraged.

"He called a meeting of the stockholders, made a report of the condition of affairs, and stated that they must have sixty thousand dollars to pay for the rails and get them down.

"I think I came forward and said, 'If you want sixty thousand dollars, let us mortgage the road for about eighty thousand dollars.' 'But who will buy the bonds?' was asked. 'Suppose we mortgage the road for eighty thousand dollars and sell the bonds for eighty per cent.; you would take some, Dr. Wilder, and you, Mr. Perkins, and thus get the rails with the sixty thousand dollars obtained from selling the eighty thousand dollars of bonds.' I carried it. I got a majority of the stock with me.

"Mr. Perkins said, 'I resign my position on this board.' He objected to the bonds being sold below par. It was the only way, in my mind, for the money to be raised. Records should show the doings of that meeting. We raised money enough by them to get the iron rails, just before winter set in, the winter of 1848. The road was already graded and land damages paid. I was chosen director in place of Mr. Perkins. Soon after, Dr. Wilder resigned, and I was chosen president. I went on and had the rails laid; had one lawsuit. The rails were bought by Dr. Wilder, and the contractor demanded some two or three thousand dollars interest for the time the rails laid in Boston, we being unable to pay for them. We had to pay it. Rails were put down during the winter. The ground was frozen pretty hard. The directors of the road were Dr. Wilder, James H. Carter, Mr. Perkins, Abial J. Town, Samuel Houghton and Joel Pratt of Sterling, and a Sterling tanner (I don't remember who), Dr. Field and J. C. Allen of Leominster, —nine directors. It was fourteen miles to Sterling Junction. We opened in 1849, with only one engine, which ran back and forth. The first engine was the 'Washacum.' The Worcester and Nashua road ran it for us, for a time. We had the 'Washacum,' and one baggage car and one passenger car. The 'Uncle Tom' was bought of the Providence and Boston road. We bought it, and the directors gave their note for it. We ran with these two for a time, and then got a third, called the 'Rollstone,' in February, 1849. It was in the fall of 1848 that we raised the money. Began grading in 1847."

This road was built for a small sum of money, was economically managed, and became a paying investment long before it was absorbed by the Boston, Clinton and Fitchburg Railroad Company, which occurred in July, 1869; and later it became a part of the Old Colony system, in March, 1883.

It was quite a small affair, at best, but it formed a very important connecting link between Fitchburg, New York and the west. It started with three trips each way, daily, and it is a singular fact that it runs only the same number to this day, and substantially on the same time as at the beginning.

The Boston, Clinton and Fitchburg railroad, alluded to above, was started at a much later period than is covered by this paper, and its opening career is not therefore taken up.

We have seen what the ten years, from 1840 to 1850, brought to us in improved communication with the outer world. It goes without saying that all this development of these towns and cities, all along the lines of these steam-highways, has chiefly come from the facilities these lines have afforded. All honor to those men of enterprise (most of them now in their graves) who were foremost in pushing these great enterprises. To be sure, it was substantially all to come in due time, but it seems to me that a remarkable amount was accomplished in this direction in that short decade. It should be remembered that money was comparatively hard to raise in those days, and also that every share of stock represented one hundred dollars, "for it had not then become the fashion to build railroads on bonds sold below par with the stock practically thrown in." The whole country was scoured to raise these subscriptions. All classes were called upon to contribute, and the hard earnings of the farmer and

the mechanic were called out in a multitude of one, two and three to five-share subscriptions to a project which could not be absolutely demonstrated as a paying one, and which in some cases, notably the Vermont and Massachusetts railroad, proved disastrous; for the stock of that road began to sink from the completion of the road, and continued for years, until it touched bottom at seven dollars per share,—and never in fact paid a dividend until a short time before it was consolidated with the Fitchburg.

In the forty years succeeding the decade we have had under consideration, great advances have been made in railroads and their equipment. What the future has in store for the people who may come after us, we may not fathom. Electrical development is now the problem, and we may be sure that the people of this enterprising community will not be behind their predecessors in grasping every opportunity which may tend to promote their material prosperity.

## ON THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE FIRE SERVICE OF FITCHBURG.

*Read before the Society, March 21, 1892.*

BY J. F. D. GARFIELD.

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In a recent pamphlet on the fire department of Fitchburg, the writer states that "The early history of the fire service of the town seems shrouded in obscurity. The facts connected with the establishing of the first company, the purchase of the first engine, etc., have faded from the minds of the 'oldest inhabitant,' and no records concerning these events are to be found."\*

The records of the town show that for the first fifty years or more the only action of the citizens in their corporate capacity, in relation to fires, was to choose at each annual town meeting certain persons denominated fire wards, whose duty it was to direct the efforts of the citizens in saving property from destruction by fire. At the first meeting of the town after its incorporation, March 5, 1764, Ezra Whitney and Hezekiah Hodgkins were chosen "fier wards." The following year the voters chose Ebenezer Bridge and Ephraim Osborn "to be men to take care of the fier the year insuing." In March, 1766, "chose John Fitch and Kindal Boutell to take care of fiers;" and in 1767 Phinehas Steward and Ebenezer Bridge were chosen fire wards. This custom prevailed with little variation,

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\*The "Fire Service of Fitchburg," published by the Firemen's Fund Association, 1888.

except to increase the number of these officials, up to the time of the incorporation of the fire department, by act of the legislature, in 1851.

As the town increased in population and wealth it was found desirable to organize for more efficient service in protecting the homes of the people and their property from fire. The first fire company in town of which we have any knowledge, was the Fitchburg Fire Club, an association of property owners in the village, who procured at their own private expense a small fire engine, and such simple apparatus as could be had in those early days; and this engine was the only one in the town for several years.

Fortunately, a manuscript document has recently come to light from among private papers, which throws some light upon the early history of this service. It consists of a report presented by a committee, of which Ebenezer Torrey, Esq., was chairman, at a town meeting held May 4, 1835. It is here offered as an interesting contribution to this department of our local history.

"The committee to whom was referred the fifteenth article in the warrant for the last annual March meeting, viz.: 'To see if the town will take measures to procure a new fire engine, or act anything in favor of strengthening the efficiency of their fire department,' have attended to the duty assigned them, and now respectfully submit the following report:

"There is but one engine belonging to the town. This engine was purchased ten years since, is stationed in the Old City, and has been in use for that length of time. The town contributed seventy-five dollars towards this engine, and fifty dollars for its buckets; and your committee are not aware that the town has ever paid beyond this sum of one hundred and twenty-five dollars, for the creation or support of a fire department.

"The other engine is a much older and smaller one; was originally purchased, has always been kept in repair, and is still the property of the Fitchburg Fire Club. This association, which is composed of owners of buildings in the village and near it, has expended within ten years, as

nearly as can be ascertained, for the necessary repairs of both engines, for buckets, fire hooks, ropes and other apparatus, the sum of four hundred dollars, which has been voluntarily paid by the members, in addition to the expense of furnishing themselves with a ladder, two buckets and two fire bags.

"Both of these engines are now in a condition to be used, although neither of them are in full repair, or so efficient as they were formerly. There are a sufficient number of fire hooks, but these are now nearly useless for want of strong ropes. The engine belonging to the town has no engine house; and the other house is quite too small. Of the buildings in town exposed to fire, a majority, both in number and value, are situated in the village, and so near to it as to be within the reach of the certain and immediate benefit of the engines.

"Your committee are aware that the advantages resulting from engines do not operate equally to every inhabitant. A fire in the centre of the town, near the location of the engines, and in the midst of a dense population, might be extinguished by their aid, while another in the remote parts of the town could not. But this objection might be raised in almost any other case. A great portion of the money raised and expended annually to defray the necessary town charges, does not benefit the inhabitants in different parts of the town equally. A new road may be made through one portion of the town, contributing to the convenience and enhancing the value of the property and estates on the route; while another part of the town may not only experience no advantage from it, but lose the travel and suffer depreciation of property in consequence of it. Yet the expense of making such a road is borne by all, equally.

"No one, probably, will deny that a great and destructive fire, which might consume a large number of buildings, and utterly destroy a great amount of property, is a public loss to the town, and affects every inhabitant in it. For the whole amount of property is reduced, and the town is so much the poorer.

"Entertaining these views, and being deeply impressed with the propriety and duty of making every preparation, and taking every precaution to guard against disasters by fire, your committee are of the opinion that the sum of seven hundred dollars will be necessary to procure a new and sufficient engine and hose, and make such repairs on the old engines and apparatus as will place our fire department in a safe and prudent condition; and they are further of the opinion that a portion of the expense should be borne by the town.

"They therefore, in obedience to their instructions, unanimously recommend to the town to appropriate the sum of four hundred dollars to purchase a new engine and hose.

(Signed)

"EBENEZER TORREY, *Chairman.*

The other members of the committee were Alpheus Kimball, Horace Newton, Joseph Downe, and Ivers Phillips.

The town accepted the report, and voted to appropriate four hundred dollars for the purchase of a new engine; the money to be drawn from the treasury whenever a sufficient sum in addition should be raised by voluntary subscription to make up enough to purchase a good and efficient machine. The vote passed, forty-three in favor, to thirty-three in opposition. The selectmen were authorized to determine when such an amount had been raised, and then to make the purchase.

At the same meeting it was voted "to allow the engine men who performed the duty required by law the year ensuing a sum equal to their poll tax." This was doubtless the first vote ever passed by the town in the direction of a paid fire department. The same vote was repeated year after year for fifteen or twenty years, and afforded the only pay the firemen received, for their services.

For fifteen years previous to this time there are various entries in the records of the town which show that the people were alive to the importance of providing more efficient means of fighting the "fire fiend."

In October, 1821, a vote was passed to "provide ten pair buckets for the engine company." This company, it will be borne in mind, was the old "Fitchburg Fire Club," and the engine was their private property. It was a small affair, made simply to throw water, but with no power of suction for drawing it, and having to be fed by hand with buckets. It was for some years located in



Factory square, but eventually was removed to West street, near the present Pitts mill. It was finally passed over to the boys, who organized a company and paraded with it from time to time, while in terms of derision, for its inferior size and capacity, they called it the "scissors grinder." If this old machine had been preserved to the present day, it would be an interesting relic to store in some spare corner of the new fire station, that is to be.

In March, 1823, an article appeared in the warrant "to see if the town will purchase a fire engine, or act anything thereon;" upon which it was voted to raise one hundred dollars for that purpose; and Capt. Zachariah Sheldon and Jonas Marshall, Jr., were chosen a committee "to superintend the purchase" of the engine. It was also voted to accept the offer of Oliver Fox "to build an engine house and give the land, provided the engine be kept down in the Old City, so called." At the same meeting, Alpheus Kimball, Francis Perkins, Joseph Farwell, Oliver Fox and Amos Durant were chosen fire wards.

In April, 1827, it was voted to raise seventy-five dollars to pay the expense of *completing* the fire engine, and fifty dollars for buckets. This appropriation appears to be the one referred to by Mr. Torrey eight years later. The buckets provided by the town were of leather, and were made by Dea. Asher Green—lately gone to his reward—whose sign, "Saddlery and Harness Work," then appeared on a building next below where the city hall now stands.

In May, 1828, an article was inserted in the warrant, to see if the town would appropriate any sum of money for the construction of a reservoir for water on the common, on which it was voted to build a reservoir on the common, with two pumps, at an expense not exceeding fifty dollars; and David Boutelle, Zachariah Sheldon and Manasseh Sawyer were chosen a committee to carry out

the vote. Either the appropriation was too small or the committee were too extravagant in their expenditures, for in September, 1829, on an article "to see if the town will authorize their committee to pay the remainder of the expense of the town well and pump," it was voted to pass the article over; but in March, 1831, the matter came up again, "to see if the town will pay the bills of the committee for building a reservoir on the common, in 1828, or act anything thereon." Voted, to refer the matter to a committee of three, to report at a future meeting; and chose Dr. Charles W. Wilder, Josiah Brown and Jonas Marshall for said committee. So far as appears in the record, this committee never made any report.

The town well was located in the central portion of the upper common, directly opposite the old town house, now Crocker's Hall. The pump was a double-action affair, throwing two streams of water, the handle working from a central pivot and extending on either side so as to be operated by two or more persons at the same time. It eventually fell into disuse, the pump was removed, the well covered over; and in the march of modern improvements all traces of the old town well and pump have disappeared from view.

The engine ordered in 1823, and for which a second appropriation was voted in 1827, was wholly a product of Fitchburg labor and skill. It is said to have been built by Abijah Hartwell, at the shop on Rollstone street, and ironed by Elijah Brigham, who carried on blacksmithing a few rods west of the American House, where now stands the brick block of Coggshall & Carpenter. This was the first engine owned by the town, and, like its more ancient prototype of the Fire Club, had to be fed by hand.

With such poor facilities and such scanty resources for dealing with fires, it may well be supposed that when a fire occurred it was very likely to prove a total loss.

About all that could be done was to protect adjoining property, or to dampen the devouring element while furniture and other goods were being removed. With a population of barely two thousand in town, it is probable that fires in those early days were comparatively few and far between. The year 1828, however, proved an exception in this respect, for in May of that year the town voted to offer a reward of two hundred dollars for the apprehension of any person or persons who should be convicted of having set fire to the buildings which had been recently burned. The buildings referred to were the carpenter shop of Capt. Zachariah Sheldon, on Rollstone street, the barn of Dr. Jonas Marshall, on the James Phillips place, and the dwelling-house of Benjamin Snow, where Mrs. Alvah Crocker now lives. All these were burned to the ground in the night. Three successive destructive fires, following each other in rapid succession, filled the inhabitants with consternation and alarm. A force was organized to patrol the town during the night, and vigorous efforts were made to detect the incendiary. Two or three disreputable characters were suspected, and one Jonas Spaulding, (a *non compos*,) was arrested on a charge of burning Sheldon's shop. He was tried, convicted, and sent to prison; while the real author of all the mischief,—a dyed-in-the-wool scoundrel,—was suffered to go unsuspected and unpunished. This was one Crosby, a school-master, who was then teaching in the little yellow school-house near the head of the common, where now stands the house of Mrs. D. H. Merriam. Crosby slept in the school-house, and carried on his diabolical work, even while the patrol were going their rounds. He was always among the first to arrive at a fire, and made himself conspicuous by his efforts to arrest the flames and save property, and to rescue the occupants of the burning buildings. He left the town, and continuing his career of

crime, it is said, eventually met his just reward under the law at the hands of the hangman.

The history of the service from 1835 to the present time it would be comparatively easy to trace. The records are more perfect, the files of the local newspapers would greatly help, and especially the recollections of some of our older citizens who bore an active part in that service, would lend an interest and afford a completeness which cannot be given to its earlier history. Not many of the boys of those early days are with us now, but a few still remain, and nothing awakes the old-time enthusiasm and stirs the blood in their veins so quickly and so thoroughly as to talk over the times and recall the scenes of the days when they "ran with the machine."

## POSTAL COMMUNICATION—PAST AND PRESENT.

*Read at a meeting of the Society, April 17, 1893.*

BY FREDERICK A. CURRIER.

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Said a Postmaster General in a recent report: "There is nothing which more deeply interests every man, woman, and child, in this country of ours, than the safe handling of correspondence." The post-office in every city, town, village, or hamlet, whether enclosed by the walls of a public building or crowded into the corner of a country store, holds an unflagging interest for old and young, who with expectancy seek its missives. In the smaller towns and villages it is the natural rendezvous for meetings of business and pleasure, and "going to the post-office" is one of the regular duties and habits of the people.

The post-office is the visible form of the national government in every community, and its hand is the only one touching the local life, the social and business interests of every neighborhood. It brings the government to every door in the land, and makes it the ready and faithful servitor of every interest of commerce and society. So much may depend upon a letter; a letter gone astray, or delayed, may alter the course and fortune of more than one life. To the post we entrust the inmost secrets of our hearts and the particulars of our most important business enterprises, enclosed in paper envelopes, with full confidence in their being promptly delivered into the hands for which they are intended.

Emerson, in speaking of the common honesty and faith which prevails in the world, once used the post-office as an illustration, saying: "To think that a bit of paper, containing our most secret thoughts, and protected only by a seal, should travel safely from one end of the world to the other, without anyone whose hands it had passed through having meddled with it." In the words of a recent writer: "The swift-flying mails, darting by day and night continuously across the continent from sea to sea, touching every home, every heart, and every mind,—what are they but the restless and silent shuttle that weaves the magic web of a nobler civilization?" Over the door of the post-office in Hong Kong are inscribed the words: "As cool water is to the thirsty, so is good news from home."

When the Pilgrims landed on Plymouth Rock in 1620, the means of communication, even in England, were very poor. Letters were carried by foot posts, sixteen to eighteen miles per day, and it was full two months before answers could be received from Scotland and Ireland to London. In 1635, when Boston was five years old, the establishment of "a post to go night and day between London and Edinboro', and make the round trip in six days, (weather and highwaymen permitting,)" was considered a remarkable event. The mail not infrequently consisted of only five or six letters, and in one instance of only a single letter, which was for a banker named Ramsey, in Edinboro'.

Parton's "Life of Franklin" has the following account of the early postal system:

"Letters arriving from beyond the sea were usually delivered on board the ship into the hands of the persons to whom they were addressed, every family sending a member on board for the purpose of receiving letters. Letters not called for were taken by the captain to a coffee-house near the wharf, where they were spread out on a table waiting the coming of their owners. Persons from adjacent settlements called at the

coffee-house and carried away not only their own letters, but all letters belonging to the people in the neighborhood, which they either delivered in person, or deposited at the house of the minister or magistrate, or some relative of the individual to whom the letter was addressed. Hence the custom grew of depositing at the ship coffee-house, letters written in the town and destined to a place in the interior, as well as letters brought from the country and directed to an inhabitant of the town. As the settlements grew in number and magnitude, it became usual to leave letters directed to one of them at the inn most frequented by the inhabitants of that settlement. Thus, several years before there was a post-office or a post-rider in the colonies, a rude, slow, unsafe, but neighborly system of letter delivery had sprung up; and long after the establishment of a post-office, this neighborly method continued to be the main dependence of the people for the transportation of letters for short distances."

Drake relates of the couriers who rode post haste on government business, that it was no uncommon thing to find them dead and scalped on the road; and when the route became especially dangerous, dogs were trained to the task, and an authentic instance is recorded of a faithful animal killed by a prowling savage, while on his round of duty.

The first official attention to the matter of the needs of New England appears in 1638, (four years after the proclamation of the crown establishing a general postal system in England,) when the home government considered "the establishment of a post-office for New England, so useful and so absolutely necessary," said the proposal, but nothing resulted from it. Nov. 5, 1639, the general court of the colony resolved:

"For preventing the miscarriage of letters, it is ordered that notice be given that Richard Fairbanks, his house in Boston, is the place appointed for all letters which are brought from beyond the seas, or are to be sent thither, are to be brought unto; & he is to take care that they be delivered, or sent according to the directions, & he is allowed for every such letter a 1d., & must answer all miscarriages through his own neglect in this line; provided that no man shall be compelled to bring his letters thither except he please."

In 1666 we find recorded: "As yet there was no post-office arrangement except that a person had been appointed to receive and transmit letters which were brought from beyond the seas or which were sent thither." In 1672 the first regular mail between New York and Boston, established by the government of New York, was announced as follows:

"Those that be disposed to send letters are to bring them to the secretary's office, where is a locked box: they shall be preserved till the messenger calls for them, all persons paying post before the bag be sealed up."

This was a post to go monthly between New York and Boston.

In 1677 general complaint arose as to the conveyance of letters. King Philip's war made communication with the country towns very precarious, and in Boston the custom prevailed of depositing letters in the town house or exchange, "that who will may take them up," say the petitioners. In particular, letters in reference to payment of subscriptions to Harvard College had miscarried, so that when the merchants of Boston petitioned the council, in June, 1677, it was very prompt to act, and appointed John Hayward, "the scrivener," as postmaster, and he had general charge of postal matters for the whole colony.

November 19, 1685, Edmund Randolph was placed in charge of the postal affairs by King James II, but no record appears of any action by him in the matter.

In 1687 Sir Edmund Andros writes to John Allyn, in regard to a contemplated post "between Boston and the furthest settlements of distant Connecticut:" "I have spoken to Perry of his going once a month this winter, if not farther, as far as Fairfield and Stamford, as I design oftener in the spring." Allyn replied, December 5th:



"I believe Perry will undertake once a month to pass from Boston to Fairfield in winter, and once in three weeks in summer, or oftener, if your Excellency desires it, and the charge on the whole will be no great matter: should it be put upon letters only, at first, I believe it would not satisfy the post, but if it were tried one year by a salary the better gauge may be given for a further settlement of it."

We find an order of council, July 22, 1688, reading:

"And his Majesty is also pleased to order that letter offices be settled in such other of his Majesty's plantations in America as shall by the Earl of Rochester be found convenient to his Majesty's service and the ease and benefit of his subjects."

In 1689 the accession of William and Mary to the throne dissolved Randolph's appointment, and on June 11, 1689, the general court appointed Richard Wilkins to receive all letters and deliver them out, and receive for each letter a penny.

February 17, 1691, their majesties William and Mary granted authority to Thomas Neale "to set up offices at the chief ports of their majesties' colonies and plantations in North America for the receiving and despatching of letters and packets, to be paid, however, for his service, such rates and sums of money as the planters shall agree to give." Neale appointed Andrew Hamilton his deputy; he applied to the colonial legislatures "to establish such rates for conveyance of postal matter as, affording him sufficient compensation, should tend to the quicker maintenance of mutual correspondence amongst the neighboring colonies and plantations, and that trade and commerce might be the better preserved." The governments of New England received the proposal favorably, and granted mail carriage free passage over their ferries.

Massachusetts, June 9, 1693, established a "general letter office," and fixed the rates, "two pence for a single letter from Europe, the West Indies or other ports beyond the seas," and for a single letter carried between Boston

and Maryland or Virginia two shillings, and to New York one shilling, to Philadelphia fifteen pence, Boston to Salem three pence, to Ipswich four pence, to Portsmouth six pence; and under authority given by the general court, Hamilton in 1694 appointed Duncan Campbell, a Scotchman, postmaster at Boston.

In 1693 the receipts of the New York post amounted to only sixty-one pounds, and in 1698 posts had been established from Boston to New York and New York to Newcastle in Pennsylvania. The New York postmaster received a salary of twenty pounds per year, and one hundred and ten pounds for carrying the mail half way to Boston.

In 1704 the *Boston News Letter* announced the change of the monthly mail to a fortnightly one, as follows:

“By order of the Postmaster General of North America, these are to give notice that on Monday night, the sixth of December, the western post between Boston and New York sets out once a fortnight.”

Probably some of the good old people of Massachusetts thought this innovation could not be kept up, for there surely would not be letters enough to pay the expense of the messengers' going with the mails (who received three pence per mile). In a letter dated New York, July 1, 1708, we read:

“From Boston there is a post by which we can hear once a week in summer, and once a fortnight in winter. Sometimes a letter is six weeks coming from Virginia and sometimes longer.”

A post-office for North America was established by parliament in 1710, with the chief office at New York, (Philadelphia having been previously the principal office in the colonies,) with rates of postage from London to New York of one shilling for each sheet of paper; double, two shillings; treble, three shillings; one ounce, four shillings.

The first number of the *News Letter* was issued from the Boston post-office by Postmaster John Campbell, April 17, 1704. Isaiah Thomas, in his "History of Printing in America," says that "in 1704, there were only four or five postmasters in all the colonies;" and it was not until 1705 that there was a regular post farther east than Boston, or farther west than Philadelphia. In 1711 a proposition to start a foot-post from New York to Albany was advertised. The *News Letter* of May 31, 1714, gives notice:

"That the post-office in Boston is opened every Monday morning, from the middle of March to the middle of September, at seven o'clock, to deliver out all letters that do come by the post, till twelve o'clock. From twelve to two o'clock, being dinner hour, no office is kept. In the afternoon it is open from two to six o'clock, to take in all letters to go by the southern and western post, and none to be taken in after that hour (six) excepting for the eastern post, and till seven at night."

Letters from Europe were the most eagerly sought, and the postmaster complains "that people were in habit of going on board of vessels when they came into port, and taking possession of letters, with the promise to deliver them to the proper persons."

The *News Letter* of January 4, 1713, announces that December 14th was quarter day for paying of postage of letters at the Boston post-office, and gives notice that those who have not already paid, must do so by January 5th, if they desire to be credited in future.

For several years, the receipts not equaling the expenditures, the general court granted an allowance of twenty-five pounds per year.

Of the postal facilities of the times we get a glimpse from the *News Letter*. In 1711 we find brief mention, "For the benefit of masters and merchants," that "all of the posts are in, and set out next Monday night." "The eastern post now goes through to Marblehead every week."

In 1711 Harley's packet boat is advertised to sail from New York for Bristol, England, May 15th, and Postmaster Campbell announces:

"All persons who intend to send letters to Great Britain and Ireland, or any other part of Europe, are desired to bring them to the post-office in Boston on Monday, April 28, or Monday, May 5, which will be the *last day* for receiving letters to go by said packet. And paying usual postage to New York and usual postage of foreign letters to Europe, due care shall be taken to put them on board of said packet and convey them safely, as directed."

November 19, 1716:

"Monday, the third of December next, the Western post for Connecticut and New York, sets out only once a fortnight the three winter months of December, January and February."

A map of New England, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, published in London in 1729, gives

"An account of ye post of Nth. America as they are regulated by the Postmasters Gen'l, of ye post house: The western post sets out from Philadelphia every Friday, and arrives at New York on Sunday night: the distance between Philadelphia and New York being one hundred and six miles. The post goes eastward every Monday morning, and arrives at Seabrook Thursday noon, being one hundred and fifty miles, where the post for Boston sets out at the same time; the New York post returning with the eastern letters, and the Boston with the western. There are offices kept at Burlington and Perth Amboy, in New Jersey; New London and Stonnington, in Connecticut; Bristol in Rhode Island; Ipswich, Salem, Marblehead, and Newbury, in Massachusetts; and the three great offices are at Boston, New York, and Philadelphia."

In 1753, Benjamin Franklin, who had been postmaster at Philadelphia for sixteen years, was appointed Deputy Postmaster General for the colonies, (much to his satisfaction), with a small salary, which—it was quaintly added—"he could have if he could get it." He reorganized the mail service, increasing the mails between New York and Boston from weekly in summer and fortnightly in winter to weekly in winter and tri-weekly in summer; reducing

the time required to write from Philadelphia to Boston and receive a 'reply, from seven weeks to three. He also compelled the post riders to break up the exclusive privilege of the postmasters who, from the establishment of the *News Letter* until the Revolution, were almost exclusively the publishers of the newspapers, and had excluded all but their own papers; so that, on a change of postmaster, the paper had to be sold out or discontinued. There being no charge for postage on newspapers, it would appear a valuable privilege; but Campbell complains that, after a struggle of fifteen years with the *News Letter*, he had only a circulation of three hundred copies. He boasted, however, that his European news was only five months old, instead of thirteen months as had been the case a few months before.

Franklin, soon after his appointment in 1753, commenced an inspecting tour, visiting every post-office in the country except Charleston, S. C. The line of posts at this time extended along the coast from Boston to Charleston, and not until 1773 were there any cross posts into the interior. He infused new vigor into the system, toiling for four years without reward, and in fact at the end of that time the department owed him nine hundred pounds. The rates of postage as established by Franklin were:

Ocean postage, one shilling; by vessels along the coast, for any distance, long or short, four pence; by land, sixty miles, four pence; one hundred miles, six pence; two hundred miles, eight pence; every additional one hundred miles, two pence.

Franklin, as colonial Postmaster General, set the mile stones on the old post road or King's highway, from Boston to Philadelphia; and, as with everything else entrusted to him, it was well done. He drove over the road in a comfortable chaise, attached to the wheels of which was an arrangement for measuring the distance by the number of revolutions of the wheels; and the number of

miles traveled was designated by the placing of the mile stones, which were set by a gang of men who followed with a large team with the stones, which were marked with the distance to the next large town. Some of these moss-covered stones are still to be seen, set up under Franklin's supervision, and put us closely in touch with the past.

In Governor Hutchinson's time, mile stones were set up on all the post roads in Massachusetts, and we can still see on Lincoln street, in the heart of the city of Worcester, on the old post road from Boston to Albany, the old red sandstone marked "42 miles to Boston and 50 miles to Springfield, 1771."

In 1755, James Franklin, (brother of the philosopher,) postmaster at Boston, published in the *News Letter* the first list of unclaimed letters, containing three hundred and fifty-one names, and for nearly all parts of the state.

The condition of the roads was such as to render traveling slow, difficult and dangerous; and intercourse was laborious, tedious, and expensive. The mails were transported, as almost all passing was performed, on horseback; and a journey of one hundred miles was a matter of greater preparation, apprehension, and toil, than a trip of three thousand miles at the present day. Not until 1761 was there any kind of public conveyance put on the roads out of Boston.

It is interesting to note the following extract from a personal letter of Franklin, dated May 27, 1757, as to New York postal service:

"Mr. Colden (postmaster) could not spare his daughter (to go on a visit), as she helps him in the post-office, he having *no clerk*."

The act of parliament taking effect October 10, 1765, establishing rates of postage, has the following list of post-offices in America:

New York; Perth Amboy, chief town of West New Jersey; Bridlington, New Jersey; New London, chief town of Connecticut; Philadelphia, chief town of Pennsylvania; Newport, chief town of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations; Boston, chief town of Massachusetts Bay in New England; Portsmouth, New Hampshire; Annapolis, chief town of Maryland; Salem, Ipswich, Piscatawney, Massachusetts; Williamsburg, chief office in Virginia; Charleston, chief office for North and South Carolina.

July 26, 1775, nearly a year before the Declaration of Independence, a resolution was passed by the continental congress creating a post-office department, with headquarters at Philadelphia, and appointed Benjamin Franklin as Postmaster General.\* He retained the position a short time only, being sent to France on diplomatic business. His son-in-law, Richard Bache, was appointed his successor, November 7, 1776.

Franklin found only twenty-eight post-offices in the entire country, Massachusetts having, at her own expense, established fourteen within her borders, New Hampshire one, and the rest scattered among the other colonies.

At this time mails between Boston and New York, taking from six to nine days for the trip from one city to the other, did not exceed in weight and bulk the capacity of a pair of saddle bags. One mail, after the "blizzard" of 1888, brought three hundred thousand letters from New York to Boston.

One of the most precious treasures now in the possession of the post-office department is the original ledger of Doctor Benjamin Franklin, rescued from the flames at the fire of December 15, 1836, which destroyed most of the records of the post-office department. It embraces the accounts of all the post-offices of the United States, and contains one hundred and twenty-four pages of "flat-cap" paper, every word, figure and mark being in Franklin's

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\*Tradition says that Franklin was accustomed to frank his correspondence "B. free, Franklin," instead of "Free, B. Franklin."

own handwriting. The accounts are kept in pounds, shillings and pence, each state having its own currency.

The teamsters were the weekly newsmen, and brought the Boston news, (much of which was verbal,) and perhaps a few of the newspapers of the day; and probably handled more money than anyone else in those days. They were the predecessors of the post boy, who was in time succeeded by the mail coach, which in turn gave way to the railroad.

Among the first acts of the continental congress was the establishment of a post route from Savannah, in Georgia, to Falmouth, in Massachusetts. We copy the following from an old letter:

"We are to be a post town and have an office and two riders, and pay postage to the continental congress. The provincial congress now setting in Philadelphia has established a mail route from Cambridge through Falmouth, running once every week, and the charge will be six and eight pence for each letter."

The arrival of the first government courier was an important event, galloping his horse into town, dismounting at the door of the new office, and extracting his small package of mail matter from the saddle bags, handing it to the new postmaster, who ceremoniously withdrew to the recesses of his private office, while the admiring townsmen silently assisted at the front. Many, however, continued to send their letters by private hands.

The growth of the postal service may be partly measured by the fact that its money record running through the first eleven years is equalled, at the present time, by the account for two days. The postage was eighteen times what it now costs to send a letter beyond the Rocky Mountains, into regions that, to our forefathers, were an unknown wilderness. A daily mail was unknown; a weekly mail a luxury, enjoyed by only a small part of the country. The average day's journey was from



thirty to fifty miles, and not until 1792 was the marvelous speed of one hundred miles per day thought of. A weekly newspaper was all that the most inquisitive or ambitious could obtain for the gratification of his curiosity, or the ventilation of his views. They contained a very meagre account of news, consisting principally of extracts from foreign letters, and were in decided contrast with the newspapers of the present time, when fast trains and electricity make happenings of to-day ancient history a week later.

We find a memorial, addressed by Ebenezer Hazard, Postmaster General, after his appointment (January 28, 1782), to the continental congress, in which he states that owing to the frequent removals of the continental army, he has been subjected to great expense, difficulty, and fatigue; having to pay an exorbitant price for every necessary of life, and obliged, for want of a horse (which could not be procured), to follow the army on foot.

The postal facilities in England at this time are shown in Knight's History of England, which says that

"In 1783 the letter bags were carried by boys, on horseback; if a bag reached its destination in safety, without being rifled, it was more of a happy chance than by any care of the post-office authorities for the prevention of robbery; as to accelerating the conveyance of letters, that was an impossibility. A letter from London to Glasgow was only five days on the road—what more could be done? A proposition to bring mail from Bath to London (then requiring three days) in sixteen hours, was greeted with derision at so wild a scheme, by the wise officials."

Long after stage coaches had come into use, the mails were still carried upon horseback, at the rapid rate of three or four miles an hour. Boys of fourteen years of age wore the ridiculous garb of the post boy, the hat with a cockade, scarlet coat, blue knee breeches, and white stockings. Each boy carried two capacious letter bags,

and he and his mails were mounted on any kind of a beast, the only necessary qualification for entering the government service, as post boy's horse, being cheapness. When the post boys went three or four miles an hour, the correspondence entrusted to them was very small; but when mail coaches were put on, the first of which left London in 1784, and which went at six miles an hour, the mail matter increased perceptibly; and when the speed of the coaches was increased to eight and even nine miles an hour, the amount of mail was at once increased. This rapid speed, though, did not agree with the passengers. Lord Chancellor Campbell says, that he was warned against traveling in mail coaches on account "of the fearful pace at which they flew;" and he speaks of an instance reported to him of a person who had died suddenly of apoplexy, on account of the rapidity of the motion.

The post boy of the last century, on his lazy horse and saddle bags, coming and going at will between scattering villages, had a free and easy way of taking care of the mail, and whiled away his time in reading the contents of letters committed to his care,—there being no locks to hinder. Many government officials found it necessary to use a cipher in their correspondence. Madison, in a letter to Jefferson, in 1784, dated October 17, wrote: "My last two letters, neither of which were in cipher, were written, as will be all future ones under the same conditions, in expectation of their being read by the postmaster."

In these days of cheap postage it is amusing to read the experiences of one hundred years ago. Hutton, in his "Life of Sir Walter Scott," relates that his postage bills were seldom less than seven hundred and fifty dollars per year, and frequently the postage was ten times the value of the article received. "Once a bulky letter came to Sir Walter all the way from the United States, for which he paid something like five pounds (twenty-five dollars) post-

age, only to discover on removing the wrapper, a manuscript, entitled 'The Cherokee Lover,' sent by a lady in New York, with a request that he read and correct it, write a prologue, and have it produced on the stage of the 'Drury Lane Theatre,' and to negotiate for a copyright. Whew! and wasn't Scott swearing mad." In about a fortnight, another large package arrived, postage unpaid five pounds, which he thoughtlessly received and tore open, only to find a duplicate copy of "The Cherokee Lover," with a letter from the same lady, saying the weather had been so stormy and mail so uncertain, she thought it prudent to send a duplicate, fearing the original might have been lost. Only two letters from New York to England, and at a cost of fifty dollars!

About 1785 stage coaches were introduced and commenced to take the place of the post rider. In 1786 we find a mail stage leaving Boston for New York three times a week in summer and twice a week in the winter, and it is announced that "all of the mails will be only four days from Boston to New York," which was referred to as "an unparalleled speed."

The first directory ever published in New York City, in 1786, advertises the "Arrival and departure of the mails from the New York post-office. Arrivals from New England and Albany, from November 1 to May 1, on Wednesday and Saturday, at seven o'clock P. M.; from May 1 to November 1, on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, at eight o'clock P. M. Departures, on Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday, at ten o'clock P. M."

On the 30th of April, 1789, Washington was inaugurated president, and the establishment of the post-office, as now organized, immediately followed. Samuel Osgood, of Massachusetts, being appointed postmaster general, assumed his duties in the city of New York, congress voting "that the postmaster general shall not keep any office

separate from the one in which the mails arriving in New York are opened and distributed, that he may, by his presence, prevent irregularities, and prevent mistakes which may occur." This now most important official, and his solitary assistant, took their first lessons in the office in New York. He found an irregular and demoralized system, consisting of only seventy-five post-offices in the entire country. The total business amounted to about one thousand letters, etc., per day; it is now nearly eight thousand for every minute of the twenty-four hours of the day.

The prevailing method of transportation of the mails being by horse and rider, this was adopted in the design of the seal for the post-office department.

The length of all the regular mail routes did not exceed eighteen hundred and seventy-five miles,—consisting of a single line of post route with here and there a diversion to a cross road,—and the average rate was fourteen miles per day. The money transactions were in the currency of the several states, which was of fluctuating value, according to circumstances and localities.

News was conveyed in a curiously roundabout fashion in those days. The news of the destruction of the Bastile, which commenced on July 14, 1789, did not reach the United States until the ship "Mary" sailed into Boston harbor, after a voyage of forty-two days from London. Contrast this with the Boston evening papers of July 14, 1889, containing full accounts of the centennial celebration of its destruction, which had occurred in Paris the same day. The execution of Louis XVI., occurring on the 21st of January, 1793, was not known in Boston for two months, the first meagre details coming by way of a ship from Lisbon, and not until April 6th were full particulars received.

The receipts of five principal post-offices in the country in 1790-91 were: Philadelphia, \$7,087.06; New York, \$3,788.04; Baltimore, \$3,034.64; Boston, \$2,883.67; Richmond, \$2,777.07. Contrast this with one hundred years later showing: Chicago, \$3,512,116; New York, \$6,386,521; Philadelphia, \$2,388,205; Boston, \$2,173,450; St. Louis, \$1,207,643.

Over half a million two-cent stamps alone are now daily sold at the New York post-office, and their stamp sales amount to over twenty thousand dollars per day.

President John Adams, writing from Philadelphia to Boston, December 28, 1795, says: "I write by every post, i. e. by Monday's and Thursday's, which are the only ones on which mails are made up for any place beyond New York, and the only ones on which letters arrive from any place beyond this city."

The death of George Washington, which occurred at Mt. Vernon, December 14, 1799, was not known in Boston until December 24, ten days later, on the arrival of two letters from Alexandria. Steam and electricity had not then been applied to realize "the lover's prayer to the gods" to "annihilate both time and space," and all classes had no choice but to await the comparatively slow progress of travel by horse and carriage.

In the year 1800 the seat of government was removed from Philadelphia to Washington, D. C., the journey between the two places at that time requiring six days. Mrs. President Adams, writing from Washington soon after her arrival, says: "Woods are all you can see from Baltimore until you reach this city (Washington), which is only so in name." None of the public buildings were in any state of completion, and the now famous "East Room" was used by the "first lady of the land" to dry her clothes in.

In 1802 the United States government ran its own mail stages between Philadelphia and New York, finding coaches, drivers, horses, etc., and clearing a profit of over eleven thousand dollars in three years by carrying passengers.

In 1802 a Boston newspaper announced a daily mail from Boston to New York, summer establishment, leaving Boston, except Sunday, at 10 A. M., and arriving in New York at noon the third day later.

The postmaster general, in 1810, congratulates the house of representatives upon the tremendous strides in the pathway of progress made by his department. He says that at the beginning of the century

"It required to write from Portland to Savannah and receive an answer, forty days; now it requires but twenty-seven. Then it required thirty-two days between Philadelphia and Lexington, Ky.; now it requires only sixteen. Then it required forty-four days between Philadelphia and Nashville; now it requires but thirty."

The treaty of peace, of the war of 1812, was signed at Ghent, Belgium, December 24, 1813: the ship bearing the news reached New York on Saturday evening, February 11, 1814, and of the excitement caused thereby "Peter Parley" has left us a graphic account. Late on Thursday afternoon came thundering down Pennsylvania avenue, Washington, a coach with four foaming steeds, conveying the welcome intelligence to President Madison and his cabinet. A special courier was at once dispatched for New Orleans, who arrived on Monday, March 6,—nineteen days later; he had traveled fast, night and day, and most eagerly had his coming been looked for. His packet was opened at headquarters, and found to contain only an old letter of no importance, written some time before. In the hurry of his departure from Washington the courier had been given the wrong package. The blank astonishment of General Jackson and his aids may be imagined. The

only proof the unlucky messenger could furnish of the genuineness of his mission, and the truth of his intelligence, was the order of the postmaster general, requiring all of the postmasters on the route to afford the courier every facility in their power for the rapid performance of the journey. On Monday, March 13, another courier arrived with the missing package.

President Monroe's veto message of May 4, 1822, could offer no better plan for the future development of the post-office department than to suggest that all the mails of the nation might profitably be carried henceforth on horseback only, unconnected with passengers and other objects; "it cannot be doubted that the mail itself may be carried in every part of our union, with nearly as much economy and greater dispatch, on horseback than in a stage, and in many parts, with *much* greater."

Postmaster General Amos Kendall, by good management, in 1825 reduced the time from New York to New Orleans from sixteen days to seven days time, causing a great rejoicing in Wall street, the national standard being raised at the Merchants' Exchange.

In 1825 Colonel Reeside, a famous mail contractor, secured the contract to carry the mails between Boston and New York, over the old post road. Reeside's stages were very showy, drawn by four blooded Virginia horses, and driven by the most accomplished "Jehus." On pleasant summer afternoons, the people of New York would—it is related—walk up the Bowery in goodly numbers, to see the "Boston mail" come in. Some time before the vehicle reached the place where the Cooper Institute now stands, the driver would herald his approach by a melodious winding of his horn, then laying aside this vulgar instrument, would resume his legitimate sceptre, the whip, which he would harmlessly crack over the heads of his spirited steeds, with a noise that, on a clear day, could be

heard a mile. In winter these gay coaches were laid aside, and a huge box on wheels substituted,—a combination not unlike a hearse, in the heart of which was deposited the load. The practice then was to abandon passengers when the roads were heavy from mud and rain.

As late as 1836 the whole postal service of the United States had not reached a volume equal, in gross receipts, to that of the average business of a New York wholesale merchant at the present day.

The Postmaster General's report for year ending Nov. 1, 1834, says: "The multiplication of railroads in different parts of the country promises within a few years to give great rapidity to the movement of travellers, and it is a subject worthy of inquiry whether measures may not be taken to secure the transportation of mails upon them." The lines of railroad at that time (1834) amounted to only seventy-eight miles.

At this date Wm. Lincoln, in his History of Worcester, mentions that the mail stage from Boston to New York now goes through in thirty-four hours, and to Philadelphia in forty-four hours.

Postmaster General Barry, in his annual report of 1835, referring to the multiplication of railroads, says: "Already the railroads between Frenchtown in Maryland, and Newcastle in Delaware, and between Camden and South Amboy, in New Jersey, afford great and important facilities to the transmission of the great Eastern Mail."

At this time, a railroad between Washington and New York was in process of construction, and Postmaster General Barry dwelt upon the important aid these facilities would afford for speedy service between the two cities, predicting that the run would be made in sixteen hours. The service is now covered in about five hours.

Postmaster General Kendall, in 1836, suggested that the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Company might be asked



to close in some part of their baggage cars, a strong lock being placed on the compartment, to which only the postmasters at Washington and Baltimore should have keys. In the same report he adds:

“If wheels can be constructed which can be used alike upon the railroads and streets of the cities, respectively, the department will furnish an entire car containing the mail, to be delivered at one depot and received at the other, asking nothing of the company but to haul it.”

It was suggested at this time that the Government should have its own locomotive, everything else giving way to the mail trains on the road, the fear being expressed that if the absolute control of the road was not held by the government the people would have to depend on stages, or other horse transportation, for mail service.

In 1842 the first envelopes made their appearance in this country, being ungummed and a new importation from France; they were soon improved by adding gum to the flaps. Their introduction was very slow, very few being used for some time, being considered a temporary “fad,” which would soon go out of fashion. The dealers did not push their sale, fearing it would interfere with their trade in seals and wax. It was also considered lacking in respect to a friend, to use them for social correspondence.

Postmaster General Niles signalized his administration (which commenced March 25, 1840), by many reforms, and among his innovations he suggested the use of a postage stamp. The suggestion was, however, received with the greatest ridicule; but England having adopted them on May 6, 1840, Congress, in 1845, authorized the use of stamps; but it neglected to make such provision as warranted the postal authorities, in their estimation, in issuing the stamps. During the period of two years preceding the issue of Government stamps, several of the principal cities of the United States issued what were known as postmaster's stamps. They were intended for

the convenience of business men who desired to mail letters after the closing of the postoffice. These stamps were issued by postmasters at New York, Philadelphia, Washington, Baltimore, St. Louis, Providence, Alexandria, Brattleboro and many other places, and were good only on letters mailed at the office from which they were issued.

Some of these stamps were merely slips of paper bearing the signatures of the postmasters. Collectors value the Baltimore stamp, which is of this character, at two hundred dollars. A stamp which was issued by the postmaster of New Haven is worth, (on an original used envelope), three hundred dollars, and more. A postage stamp issued by the Millbury postmaster, which was of elaborate design for those days and bore the head of Washington, brings easily three hundred to five hundred dollars.

The act, March 3, 1847, authorizes the Postmaster General to prepare postage stamps which, when attached to any letter or packet, shall be evidence of the payment of postage chargeable therefor; and ordered the destruction of the provisional stamps, together with the various dies and plates owned by postmasters, and in place of these the Government issued stamps of the value of five and ten cents; the five cent stamp bearing a portrait of Benjamin Franklin, printed in brown ink, and the ten cent stamp bearing a head of Washington, printed in black ink. The date of the issue was appointed as July 1st, but there was a delay in the contractor's work, and the time was extended one month.

On the 5th of August, soon after the opening of the Postmaster General's office for the day, an old gentleman called to see Mr. Johnson on business. The gentleman was the Hon. Henry Shaw, of New York, the father of "Josh Billings." While Mr. Shaw was in the office there arrived the printer of the new stamps. Sheets of the

stamps were laid before the Postmaster General, who, after receipting for them, handed them to Mr. Shaw to inspect. The visitor returned them after a hasty glance, and then, drawing out his wallet, counted out fifteen cents with which he purchased two of the stamps—the first two ever issued. The five cent stamp he preserved as a curiosity, and the ten cent stamp he presented to Governor Briggs, of Massachusetts, as an appropriate gift.

When stamps were first introduced few citizens possessed a correct idea of their use. An enterprising merchant of a New England city was one of the first to purchase a sheet of stamps. At that time the only method of cancelling the stamps was with a pen and ink stroke. The merchant took the stamps to his office and, after showing them to the clerks and explaining their advantages, he proceeded to cancel each one, as he had seen them on letters. Having occasion, later, to use one of the stamps, he was informed, to his disgust, that being cancelled they were useless. He explained that he had cancelled the stamps to save the post office clerks the trouble, but his generosity was not appreciated. Nine million postage stamps are now used daily in this country.

As late as 1851, foreign postage was so high (being from twenty-four to thirty cents) that it cost a servant girl half of a week's wages to send and receive a letter from friends in Europe. Putnam's Magazine, in 1851, referring to the proposed Pacific Railroad says: "When we get our track through to San Francisco, and have our line of steamers to the Asiatic coast, we in the Cis-Missourian states will get our China mail in forty-five days. Now what is more evident than that when one can put a girdle round the earth at that rate, we want no Ariels. It will be worth one's while to live."

Long before the United States was a nation many "mail packets" plied the ocean, carrying letters to distant

lands, performing in a rude, uncertain manner the same duties of our present improved system. These clipper packets were built for speed, to enable them to make a quick passage, and promptly deliver mails and freight, and kick their nimble heels in the faces of the pirates; the captains being instructed "to run while they could, fight when they could no longer run, and to throw the mails overboard when fighting would no longer avail." The usual time for one of the fast clipper ships to cross the Atlantic was sixteen to twenty-one days.

When people were uncertain as to whether steam was really as useful or reliable a motor as the winds of heaven, and when it did not make so much difference whether a ship spent a week more or less on the surface of the briny deep, records were at a discount. But when the world seems to be daily growing smaller, as science, art, and business, with their ceaseless round of intercommunication join together the most antipodal regions, the necessity for the most rapid transportation becomes imperative.

The first steamship to cross the Atlantic was the *Savannah* in 1819, making the trip in twenty-five days, a considerable part of the voyage being made under canvas. But no decided progress in the direction of the substitution of steam for the "winds of heaven" was made until the spring of 1838, when the famous voyage of the rival steamships *Great Western* and *Sirius* occurred. The *Sirius* set out from Cork in 1838, and with the aid of her clumsy, wooden paddle wheels, made the port of New York in seventeen days, and going back reached Falmouth in eighteen days.

The feasibility of ocean steam navigation caused radical changes, and a transfer of the conveyance of the mails from the packet service to the steamers. At this period the whole of the mail for Great Britain consisted of only one bag; at the present day, five hundred bags would be

considered a small mail by a single steamer. On one day, a short time ago, seventeen steamers departed from New York carrying mails for foreign countries, the total number of letters reaching seven hundred and thirty thousand, and five hundred and forty-nine sacks of papers.

The sleek and well-groomed racers of the present day, like the Paris, Teutonic, or Campania, make the trip in a little over five days. As late as 1841 we read: "The steamer Caledonia arrived yesterday with twenty-two days later news from Europe."

Forty years ago, before there was a postal treaty with England, people endorsed on the outside of their letters by what line of steamers they desired them to be sent. By an accident, neither of the two vessels comprising the American line crossed from England for six months; the consequence was an accumulation of letters endorsed "By American Line," and when the Washington reached New York, having broken her shaft and been frozen up all winter in Bremen, she had six months' mail on board. This collection of letters was taken to the New York post-office, and the clerks, without neglecting their daily routine duties and working overtime, distributed this accumulation in ten days. The same number of letters would now be distributed in one hour without interfering with the daily business of the office.

The discovery of gold in California, in 1848, in less than three years increased the population in San Francisco more than 150,000 persons, calling for communications to all parts of the world. The mails were conveyed at this time by water from New York to San Francisco, via Panama, requiring three to four weeks for the passage. This slow method, trying to those anxious to hear from home and embarrassing to business men, continued until October, 1858, when the first mail reached San Francisco on the 19th of October by the overland route,

having required twenty days for the trip,—a slight gain over the water route.

Horace Greeley, in his famous account of his overland journey in 1859, says: "There is now a semi-monthly mail by the way of the Isthmus, six thousand miles, or more than double the distance direct, and a semi-weekly mail carrying letters only, via the Butterfield route, (Los Angeles, Fort Yuma and El Paso,) at a cost to the post-office department of at least a million and a quarter per year." Ben Holliday's famous "Overland Stage Line," established about 1860, used to send passengers and mails across the continent from St. Joseph, Mo., to Sacramento, Cal., nearly nineteen hundred miles, in fifteen days. It was a vast machine, with hundreds of men and coaches, and thousands of mules and horses. Passengers were allowed only twenty-five pounds of baggage, and the fare was about two hundred dollars. Starting out with six splendid horses, changing every ten miles, mules being substituted a part of the way, the coaches flew over the ground.

On April 3, 1860, the famous "Pony Express" left St. Joseph, Mo., and San Francisco simultaneously, and made the trip in ten days. This was later reduced, and the trip of nineteen hundred miles was regularly covered in about eight days. The route lay across the "Great American Desert," and over several ranges of mountains, and the riders were often required to run the gauntlet of roaming savages. The riders were men full of daring and endurance, and had to be ready to leap into the saddle, and through rain and snow, in summer and in winter, by daylight or in the blackness of darkness, ride their fifty miles alone. Riding a splendid horse, keeping at his utmost speed for ten miles, he came crashing up to the next lonely station, where two men stood holding a fresh, impatient steed. The trans-

fer of the rider and the mail bag was quickly made, and in the twinkling of an eye off they flew. The weight was kept down to the lowest point, only letters being carried. The little flat mail pockets, about the bulk of a child's primer, held many important business letters, written on thin paper for economy of weight and bulk; they got very little frivolous correspondence, on account of rates. The act of congress, March 2, 1861, established a postage rate of one dollar for each half ounce, and provided that five pounds of government mail should go free. The rider's dress fitted close, consisting of a roundabout and a skull cap, with his pantaloons tucked into his boots like a jockey; he carried no firearms and nothing not absolutely necessary. The horse wore a little wafer of a racing saddle, with no blanket and with light shoes or none at all. Covering two hundred and fifty miles per day, with eighty riders in the saddle at the same time, they formed a long, scattering procession from Missouri to California, forty flying eastward and forty westward, with four hundred gallant horses, every single day of the year.

Mark Twain describes their passing the "Overland Stage:" "Presently the driver says, 'Here he comes.' Away across the dead level of the prairie appears a black speck against the sky, it is plain it 'moves.' In a second or two it becomes a horse and rider, rising and falling, rising and falling, sweeping towards us, nearer and nearer, growing more and more sharply defined, nearer and nearer the flutter of hoofs comes faintly to the ear; another instant, with a wave of the rider's hand, man and beast pass us and go winging away like the belated fragment of a storm. So sudden is it all and so like a flash of unreal fancy, that but for the flake of white foam left quivering and perishing on the mail sack after the vision has flashed by and disappeared, we might have

doubted whether we had seen any actual horse and man at all."

Free delivery by carriers in the United States was not established until March 3, 1863, although, previous to that time, most of the large cities had carriers who made a delivery of letters, and collected a voluntary fee of one or two cents on each piece of mail matter delivered.

Postal cards were introduced in 1873, and were intended for brief notices and correspondence of business men, the saving of time in folding and sealing of letters, expense of stationery, and the difference of postage,—the letter rate then being three cents for each half ounce, or six times the present rate. They proved very popular, and their use has steadily increased, notwithstanding the reduction of letter postage, so that now 600,000,000 are required annually.

Another great stride in the march of the postal service was the opening of great railways across the continent, in 1869, which has reduced the time of mail communication between New York and San Francisco or Portland, from three weeks to five days, and through the naturally resulting establishment of mail service with China and Japan, opening up direct intercourse with all of Asia and the islands of the Pacific.

The direct effect was rapidly to develop all the region west of the Mississippi river, forming populous and prosperous communities where before only the Indian and the buffalo had roamed. Their indirect effect has been the linking of America with Asia, thus completing the chain of mail service around the earth, and the inauguration of that splendid scheme of postal intercourse known now as the Universal Postal Union, whose purpose it is to unite in a sort of brotherhood all the nations of the world, making their countries a single territory, and subjecting them, so far as postal matters are concerned, to the operation of equal and exact laws.



The means of speedy intelligence enjoyed at the present time, compared with the facilities of sixty years ago, arouse the natural thought—what will the next sixty years see?

Lately an important document of thirteen hundred words was transmitted from the capital of Peru to London within a single night, at a cost of two dollars per word. The expense was trifling compared with the saving of time, as under the old system of wind and sail, such documents could only have reached their destination by a Cape Horn ocean voyage of nearly six months.

In a late critical juncture, the sender of a cablegram from Baltimore to London received his reply in nineteen minutes, enabling him by telegraph, a few minutes later, to close a pending negotiation at San Francisco, thus covering a distance of ten thousand miles within an hour. With equal facility a message from New York, via France and Brazil, to Valparaiso, brought its response to the sender within as many hours as months would formerly have been necessary to reach the Chilian government with any New York intelligence.

Fifty years ago, a circuit of the earth required three years of travel; but modern facilities and speed now render possible eighteen such trips within a like period of time. A steamship voyage from New York to Liverpool occupied twenty-one days, while it is claimed that only ten days will be required for a traveler to reach England from San Francisco, when improved facilities now in progress for expediting ocean transit shall have been completed. The necessities of commerce originate new theories and attempt doubtful schemes to facilitate commercial enterprise; bold projectors now suggest a triple girdle around the earth, combining transportation by railroad, cipher writing by telegraph, and vocal intercourse by telephone; while also doubling the present speed of ocean steamers by the application of electric motors.

## THE POST-OFFICES AND POST-MASTERS OF FITCHBURG.

*Read at a meeting of the Society, April 17, 1893.*

BY FREDERICK A. CURRIER.

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The forty scattered families comprising the population of Fitchburg on its incorporation in 1764 (the whole number of souls in the new town being only two hundred and fifty-six), enjoyed the scanty communications of the times. Boston was the only regular post-office in Massachusetts; lists of letters were advertised in the *Boston News-Letter* for all parts of the state. To receive their mail people depended on market-men or private parties, who, on visiting Boston, would call for the letters and deliver them on their return trip: a considerable time would therefore frequently elapse, and in some instances letters appear in the list for three months. The market-men were the means of communication between Boston and other towns, carrying their produce to Boston ordinarily in a two-horse covered wagon, once a week, returning with a supply of groceries and other necessities, among which appears to have been reckoned a supply of New England or Medford rum, of which there seems to have been an abundance on all occasions. A historian of our neighboring town of Berlin relates that with less than seven hundred population, that town consumed sixty hogsheads in 1825.

The *Massachusetts Spy* was removed to Worcester in 1775, and the publisher, Isaiah Thomas, took measures to

increase its circulation. In the issue of May 3, 1775, appears a list of persons who would furnish the paper, Capt. David Goodridge of Fitchburg being one of the number. The *Spy* of June 17, 1775, announces, "This day a post rider will set out from Worcester to Cambridge and Salem, and will be continued weekly, if he meets with sufficient encouragement." Leaving Worcester at noon, by hard travelling he reached Cambridge the next noon, and Salem at night.

The *Spy* of August 30, 1775, contains the first list of letters remaining in Worcester post-office, covering nearly every town in this part of the state. Isaiah Thomas was regularly appointed postmaster of Worcester, by Benjamin Franklin, September 25, 1775, and opened the office November 15, 1775. The *Spy* of November 15, gives notice that

"A Constitutional Post-Office is established for this town by the Post-master General of the United Colonies, by which means letters sent to this office may be dispatched to all the principal towns on the continent. The mail sent by eastern post is closed every Tuesday evening at five o'clock, and by western post, every Friday morning at nine o'clock. The western arriving every Tuesday evening, and eastern every Friday morning."

The mail bag carried between Worcester and Boston is described: "of canvas, seven by twelve inches and sealed with wax." The *Spy* of August 14, 1776, says:

"This day a post rider will set out from Worcester to Fitchburg, arriving at the house of Joseph Fox, in said Fitchburg, on Wednesday evening. Persons disposed to have the freshest and most important intelligence from the Grand Continental Army at New York may receive it by the rider in the Worcester *Spy*, which is published the next morning after the arrival of the southern mail, which contains all the latest advices from the grand seat of military operations. Newspapers will be delivered at said Fox's at the moderate price of ten shillings per annum, including postage. The towns in the neighborhood of Fitchburg, viz: the north part of this state, and southern part of the state of New

Hampshire, and those of the Post Road from thence to Charlestown, (No. 4) and upwards, will by this means obtain the freshest news much sooner and cheaper than from any other part of the continent. Letters conveyed to and from the post-office at Worcester, with the utmost safety and dispatch."

In the *Spy* of September 4, 1776, Nathaniel Maccarty, post rider to Fitchburg, announces that he "continues to ride to said town with the newspapers, as usual, carries letters with care, and whoever is inclined to employ him, may depend on being served with fidelity."

In the *Spy* of June 12, 1777, Joshua Houghton, of Chixit, post rider to Fitchburg, "informs his kind customers that the time for which he is engaged to ride is expired next week; he will therefore take it extremely kind if they will leave the money due him, at the several places where papers are left."

As early as 1783, a post rider passed through the southern part of Fitchburg, (it being on the post road to No. 4,) from Boston via Concord, Acton, Harvard, Fitchburg, Westminster, Ashburnham, Winchendon, etc., to Crown Point and Montreal.

There is evidence that a post rider named Webster was accustomed to bring mail into Fitchburg. He came from Groton, changing horses at Lunenburg. His widow afterwards lived for some years at the corner of Main street and Newton place, and parties recall hearing her compare the wonderful improvement of the stages over the horse-back service of her husband's time. The exact year cannot be ascertained, but was probably early in the nineties.

At about the same time a man named Balch who rode on horse-back from Boston to Keene, accommodated the people of the Pearl Hill district. He doubtless went over the old bridle path used by the post riders in the last century, which is plainly to be traced from Shirley through

Leominster, crossing not far from the Fitchburg trotting park, and a short distance below the "Three Bridges;" thence via Pearl Hill, passing the Arrington Gibson house, (recently torn down), which was one of the stopping places in the journey of the riders. A portion of road near the Freeborn Lawrence place now covers the route. It was laid out by the state and is some ten or twelve feet wide, and marked by piles of stones. Its uncultivated state frequently causes remarks, from seeing a strip of land in that condition adjoining a well-cared-for farm. It was the route to Keene and the north, and many old deeds read from the "post pass."

The census of 1791 gives Fitchburg one hundred and sixty-six dwellings and one thousand one hundred and fifty-one population. In 1793 the nearest post-offices were at Worcester and Greenfield; and the *Massachusetts Spy*, published at Worcester, had long lists of unclaimed letters for persons in nearly every town in the county, and some in the neighboring counties.

In a list of four hundred and fifty-three post-offices of the country, published in 1794, only eight appear in Massachusetts,—located at Boston, Worcester, Springfield, Lynn, Salem, Beverly, Ipswich and Newburyport,—and fifteen in the "Province of Maine."

Jotham Johnson of Leominster,—on the route from Boston to Charlestown, N. H., via Leominster, Fitchburg, Winchendon and Keene,—informed the public through the *Columbian Informer*, published at Keene, N. H., February 4, 1795, "that he transports the mail from Boston to Charlestown, N. H., conveying it in winter in a covered sleigh, carrying passengers at three pence per mile, with fourteen pounds of baggage gratis." One summer he tried the experiment of running a stage. It was quite an event in the towns along the line; it is related that "the excitement was hardly less than that attendant on the first

running of the cars, the inmates of the houses running to the doors and windows to gaze at the stage and scan the passengers." The proprietor found the roads too bad, and the patronage too small, to justify the continuance of the stage, and for several years he carried the mail on horseback in summer, and by sleigh in winter. The mail left Boston at an early hour Wednesday morning, stopping over night at Leominster, and leaving the next morning, arrived at Keene Thursday, and Friday passing to Charlestown and Walpole; returning, reaching Leominster Saturday morning, and thence on Monday morning to Boston.

Marvin's History of Winchendon says: "Johnson's arrival with the Boston mail was awaited with great impatience by the quidnuncs of the day. They thought themselves fortunate indeed in having a mail from Boston every week; it seemed to them all they could wish."

Leominster secured a post-office early in 1795, Asa Johnson, a lawyer and a very eccentric man, being appointed postmaster. Many stories are told of his peculiar habits; he is described as a man of great ability, and with an ever-ready fund of humor. He was succeeded, in 1796, by Charles Prentiss, publisher of the *Rural Repository*, a weekly newspaper, having the office in his bookstore. He publishes a list of unclaimed letters in the issue of August 4, 1796, in which appears several for Fitchburg people, including Thomas Palmer, Thurston Sargent, Harrington Gibson, and Elisha Gibson.

The *Rural Repository* of January 19, 1797, has letters unclaimed in the Leominster post-office for parties living in the following towns: Leominster, Fitchburg, Lunenburg, Sterling, Westminster, Ashburnham, Winchendon, Princeton, Randolph, Putney, Winchester, New Braintree.

In a copy of the *Telescope and American Herald*, published at Leominster, February 20, 1800, (now in Fitch-

burg public library,) appears a list of advertised letters in the Leominster post-office, containing seventeen names, and the towns represented are Leominster, Townsend, Fitchburg, Lunenburg, Winchendon, Westminster, Frances-town, Lenox and Athol.

The *Telescope* of April 9, 1801, advertises letters for Gen. James Read and six other Fitchburg parties, and John Gardner is given as postmaster. In the *Weekly Messenger* of October 30, 1806, Postmaster Gardner gives eight letters for Fitchburg.

In Isaiah Thomas's Almanac for 1801, a list of stages leaving Boston includes: "Leominster and Lancaster stage starts from Clark's Tavern, Newbury street, every Wednesday and Saturday, at sunrise, and arrives at Boston every Monday and Thursday, at five o'clock in the afternoon."

It appears strange in these days of cheap postage and rapid transportation that, for forty-seven years from the incorporation of the town, Fitchburg had no post-office. This was not so great an inconvenience as it might appear, correspondence by letter being very limited, and newspaper patronage confined to a small number of families. The offices were located at available points on the line of the established mail routes, and several other towns in this vicinity secured post-offices some time before Fitchburg.

In the proposals for carrying the mails, in the *Boston Patriot*, April 21, 1803, are mentioned the routes:

Boston to Concord, twice a week (once a week via Westford, once a week via Littleton and Groton); Concord to Leominster, twice a week, via Stow, Bolton and Lancaster; Leominster to Greenfield, once a week, via Westminster, Templeton, Gerry, Athol and New Salem.

Robert B. Thomas's Almanac for 1804 mentions that the

"Leominster mail stage sets off from Wheelock's Indian Queen Inn, 37 Marlboro street, [which is now that part of Washington street between School and Summer streets,] every Wednesday and Saturday, at five o'clock in the morning, and arrives at Leominster the same day. Leaving Leominster on Monday and Thursday at five o'clock in the morning, arrives in Boston the same day."

For many years the "Boston and Brattleboro' mail stage" passed through the town over the "Turnpike road," commencing in 1811, leaving Boston at five o'clock in the morning twice a week, stopping over night at Westminster, and reaching Brattleboro' the next day at eight in the evening. This was also the route, for some time, of the "British mail" from Boston to Montreal, of which the following description is given:

"The mail wagon was heavy and strong, and drawn by six large black horses. They would start out from Boston with a driver in uniform, and a guard armed with musket and horse pistol. Dashing through the country at a break-neck speed, changing horses at stated places, the route was through Waltham, Sudbury, Stow, Bolton, Lancaster, Leominster, and Fitchburg, which was a central or meeting point. Then on through Ashburnham, Winchendon, Fitzwilliam, Troy, and Marlboro' to Keene, N. H., which was another place of meeting. Then the route continued on through Bellows Falls and Montpelier, Vt., to Montreal, Canada."

In 1811, the year the Fitchburg post-office was established, the whole number of post-offices in the United States had reached two thousand four hundred and three, and the mails were carried forty-six thousand three hundred and eighty miles by stages, and sixty-one thousand one hundred and seventy-one miles in sulkies and on horseback. The population of the town at this time was one thousand five hundred and sixty-six.

Jacob Willard was the first postmaster of Fitchburg. All that can be learned in regard to him is that he was a graduate of Brown University, and a member of the Worcester county bar. At the centennial celebration, June,



1864, the Hon. Nathaniel Wood, in responding for the legal profession, mentioned him as the second "knight of the green bag" in Fitchburg, and adds that "under his regime occurred the case of the Commonwealth vs. Wright, celebrated as being the earliest case in Fitchburg handed down to us by tradition."

He was appointed February 13, 1811, and doubtless had the office in his residence, the location of which we have been unable to trace: perhaps, like the early postmaster of Rindge, N. H., mentioned in Stearns's history of that town, "he carried the mail in his pockets, and wherever an inquiring citizen found him, they found the post-office, also;" or, it may be, he adopted a somewhat similar custom of another New Hampshire postmaster, of filling his pockets with mail on going to church on Sunday, and there delivering it to his patrons as they came into the meeting-house,—an arrangement that was considered mutually of great convenience. Postmaster Willard retained the position less than two years, doubtless finding it a not very lucrative office, judging by the receipts. At this time we find only two mails per week for Fitchburg, leaving Boston every Wednesday and Saturday,—in decided contrast with the mail accommodations of the present day. The official returns of the Fitchburg post-office for the first year, as shown by the records of the post-office department at Washington, are as follows:

TOTAL RECEIPTS OF THE FITCHBURG POST-OFFICE.

From February 13 to June 30, 1811,	\$9.05
From July 1 to September 30, 1811,	10.43
From October 1 to December 31, 1811,	8.22
Total,	\$27.70

Calvin Willard, a prominent member of the legal fraternity, was next appointed postmaster, January 1, 1813. His residence was located where the Fitchburg Savings

Bank block now stands; and his law office (in which the post-office was kept) was a small, one-story wooden building near the same, which was afterwards removed to Snow street extension.

Calvin Willard was one of the leading citizens, and represented the town in the legislature in 1824, and during that year was appointed to the office of high sheriff of Worcester county, by Governor Lincoln. He retained that office for twenty years, resigning, it was said, rather than hang Thomas Barrett, who had been sentenced,—his experience in the execution of Horace Carter, in 1825, having been very unpleasant. He removed to Worcester on receiving his appointment, and died in that city, in 1866, at an advanced age. Of him, the following description is found:

"For more than twenty years, a most prominent figure at all of the sessions of the higher courts of this county, adding dignity to every occasion, was that of Sheriff Willard. His manner of discharging the duties of his position was a model for all who should come after him; courteous and respectful to all, he insisted that that decorum which he observed on public occasions should not be infringed by others. With the instincts of the old-school gentleman, he was most careful in regard for the etiquette to be maintained in his relations to the court and bar, to a greater extent than in our modern despatch of business; and the dignified sheriff, Calvin Willard, ever entered his protest against any attempt to override the established order on the plea of more expeditious results."

November 7, 1825, President John Quincy Adams appointed David Brigham, (another member of the Worcester county bar,) as postmaster of Fitchburg. During his term the office was located in a small wooden building, in a store also occupied for a shoe shop by a man named Sanden,—situated about where D. R. Streeter's block now stands,—afterwards in the Abram Dole house on West Main street, and later was removed to a dwelling-house then located on the present site of the Jennison House,

now removed to Wesleyan place. The old letter-drop can still be seen in the room formerly occupied by Postmaster Brigham as his law office and post-office. The entire post-office equipment of those days consisted of a barrel-shaped wheel, about two feet in diameter, with divisions for the several letters of the alphabet.

The total gross receipts of the Fitchburg office, for the year 1825, reached the sum of \$186.70; and the net revenue to the post-office department, after paying the postmaster's salary and other allowances, amounted to \$89.04. (This same year, the total receipts of the post-office in Worcester were only \$713.) Postmaster Brigham retained the office until 1834, afterwards removing west. The *Sentinel* of March 31, 1841, announced that he had been appointed postmaster at Madison, Wisconsin Territory.

The map of Fitchburg surveyed by Levi Downe in 1830, designates what is now Lunenburg street as the "mail road." The mail stages at this time, leaving Boston at four in the morning Monday, Wednesday and Friday, seldom failed to drive up to the Rollstone House in Fitchburg as the twelve-o'clock bell was ringing, reaching Keene that same evening.

In August, 1831, the stage line from Boston to Keene, N. H., became a daily line, and in January, 1832, the daily mail service to and from Boston and Keene was established. The *Fitchburg Gazette* of January 17, 1832, contained the following:

"A new mail to Boston and Keene, N. H., through this place, commenced running last week, as we presume much to the satisfaction of all who have any mail with the post-office. Three years ago but two mails came into this town weekly; we now have twenty-two, which are always of respectable size. This tells the tale of the flourishing state of our village, which few towns in Massachusetts can rival. Business has been such here, during the past year, that daily communication with Boston was much needed, and a fair prospect is open for its continued increase."

Transportation was all done by horse power, and the long lines of four to eight-horse covered wagons were a familiar sight, drawing freight for places along the route. In 1825 the Worcester mail stage passed every day except Sunday, to Princeton, Templeton, Sterling, Leominster and Fitchburg.

For many years, the only bank in this section was at Worcester. The next bank, nearest to Fitchburg, was established at Bank Village, in New Ipswich, N. H., and Mr. Abel Downe started a coach to accommodate the bank and also Appleton Academy; this continued until the establishment of Fitchburg Bank and Fitchburg Academy. In 1830 the *Fitchburg Gazette* announced that Dea. Abel Downe, mail carrier for the route from Fitchburg to Amherst, N. H., was the authorized agent for that paper.

On October 9, 1834, Mark Miller, the publisher of a weekly newspaper, the *Massachusetts Republican*, was appointed postmaster of Fitchburg by President Andrew Jackson. He removed the office to a frame building,—occupied by him on the first floor as a bookstore, and the second story as a printing office,—located where the driveway to the Fitchburg Hotel stables now is. The building was removed, first to the corner of Main and Church streets, and afterward to Oliver street, where it is now occupied as a dwelling house. A historian of those days says: "This gentleman proved himself a wolf in sheep's clothing; for, having obtained the confidence of the public, and having been appointed postmaster, he collected numerous subscriptions for the newspaper, and decamped to Albany."

January 21, 1835, the Hon. Nathaniel Wood was appointed postmaster, and retained the office sixteen years,—a longer term than any other person has ever filled the position. He removed the office to a small frame building recently torn down to make way for the new building of

the Fitchburg Mutual Fire Insurance Company. Charles Shepley had the office in his bookstore, and did the actual work of the office,—Mr. Wood giving his attention to his extensive law practice.

At this time the rates of postage were so high that correspondence was limited, and the growth of the postal service was very slow; as, when it took all the spare change in one's pockets to pay the postage of a letter and means of communication were slow and infrequent, neither business nor social life depended much on the mails. The rates were six cents for less than thirty miles, ten cents for eighty miles, twelve and one-half cents for one hundred and fifty miles, eighteen and three-fourths cents for four hundred miles, and twenty-five cents for over four hundred miles, for each sheet of paper,—every additional sheet of paper increasing the cost. There were no envelopes, and a letter was so written that on one side a part was left blank. When folded, this blank side became the back of the letter, on which the address was written. To write, fold, seal and address a letter properly, in what to us seems the primitive days of correspondence, required as much ingenuity as it now does to pack a trunk for a summer trip into the country. The charge being on each sheet of paper, without reference to weight, care was taken by the letter writer of those days to use as large a sheet of paper as he conveniently could.

Many people can remember when sealing wax or the crisp wafer fastened the carefully folded letter; and recall the days when the use of blotters was unknown, and the perforated sand-shaker dried the ink and raised the words of the bold penman into palpable black ridges, dear to the touch of childhood. In those good old days of goose quills, sand boxes, and sealing wax for adhesive purposes, delicacy and dexterity in putting the wax at the right place without burning one's fingers was a necessary part of a liberal education.

Postmasters at this time were authorized to pay the mail carriers one cent for every letter brought into the office, and the mail carrier was to demand and receive two cents, in addition to the ordinary postage, for every letter delivered by him to persons living between post-offices on his route. Postmasters were entitled to send and receive their private letters and packages, not exceeding one-half ounce in weight, free of postage.

The first directory of Fitchburg was published May 1, 1835, and gives the estimated population at two thousand five hundred, and presents the following table:

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE OF THE MAILS IN 1835.

ARRIVE FROM

Boston (via Lancaster) every day, Saturday excepted, (leaving Boston at 2 A. M.,) at 10½ A. M.

Keene (via Fitzwilliam) every day, Sunday excepted, at 11½ A. M., leaving Keene at 4 A. M.

Worcester (via Sterling) Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, at 11 A. M., leaving Worcester at 7 A. M.

Lowell (via Groton) Monday, Wednesday and Friday, at 10½ A. M., leaving Lowell at 7 A. M.

Lowell (via Pepperell) Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, at 8 A. M., leaving Lowell at 3 A. M.

Springfield (via Westminster) Monday, Wednesday and Friday, at 2 P. M., leaving Springfield at 2 A. M.

DEPARTURE FOR

Boston, every day, Sunday excepted, at 11½ A. M., arriving in Boston at 7 P. M.

Keene, every day, Sunday excepted, at 10½ A. M., arriving in Keene at 7 P. M.

Worcester, Monday, Wednesday and Friday, at 11½ A. M., arriving at Worcester at 4 P. M.

Lowell (via Groton), Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, at 11½ A. M., arriving at Lowell at 4 P. M.

Springfield, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, at 8 A. M.

Only one mail bag was used for the whole route. Fifteen minutes were allowed for opening the bag and removing the mail for the office and adding the outgoing

mail; and every thirty minutes' delay (unavoidable accidents excepted) in arriving at the end of the route at the time specified in the contract, rendered the contractors liable to a fine of double the amount allowed for carrying the mail one trip.

Torrey, in his history, 1836, says:

"The town has daily communication by means of mail stages with Boston, Keene and Lowell, and three times a week with Springfield and Worcester, and return on alternate days."

In 1840 a change in the running of the mail stages caused much dissatisfaction, and the *Sentinel* of December 22d says, "There is now but one mail per day through the place and that of little consequence." On July 7, 1841, the *Sentinel* says:

"For many years there has been a daily mail from Boston through to Keene, N. H., and Brattleboro', Vt., but a change of the arrival and departure of the mails to this place and Boston, and discontinuance of the daily mail to Keene, is felt a great inconvenience, [a tri-weekly mail appears to have been substituted,] while there are two mails per day to Templeton, a route of comparative little importance, within four or five hours of each other, also two mails per day to Groton and a daily mail to Ashburnham and Winchendon."

August 12, 1841, the *Sentinel* said: "No mail from Boston has been received up to time of going to press, and probably it will not arrive before to-morrow or some other day next week. But little attention is paid to the interests of the northern portion of the county, and those interested in the Worcester railroad are attempting to monopolize the travelling and the mails."

All the letters remaining on hand in the office on the first day of the quarter appear to have been advertised. One list published in the *Sentinel* contains two hundred and eighty-four names, including those of many well-known citizens of the town. The gross receipts for the year 1840 amounted to \$824.36.

The Fitchburg Railroad was chartered in 1843, and opened to Waltham in December of that year, to Concord June 17, 1844, and to Fitchburg March 5, 1845. The farmers opposed the railroad on the ground that it could kill the live stock, and destroy the market for horses for transporting passengers and freight; and also, thereby destroy the demand for hay and oats. It was considered a very wild project at the time, having not a large town or village on the entire line when built. As the towns of the old stage route would give no encouragement or assistance, the road was really extended through the open country, except at Waltham and Concord; but the untiring energy of Hon. Alvah Crocker made it a success, and by its opening through to Fitchburg a great impetus was given to the town. The stage drivers, during its progress, drove to its terminus and transferred passengers and mail to the cars, and, after the completion, for some time, continued to have charge of the mails, going through with them on the train.

In 1844 "Kidder" (Chederlaomer) Marshall secured the mail contract from Boston to Montreal, by a horse-back ride from Fitchburg, via Ashburnham Centre, over the regular coach road to Montreal, beating the Concord and New Hampshire route completely. On the strength of that plucky trial of speed and route, the subscription for the Cheshire railroad was secured and the road chartered,—Winchendon capital, the Murdocks, with Keene and other influential interests, seeing the wisdom of Alvah Crocker's plan, which he declared to be, at the earliest possible moment the straightening of the line between important points as rapidly as possible.

The following "Arrival and Departure of Mails," issued in 1845, shows the change that has occurred in less than fifty years in our mail facilities:



102     *The Post-Offices and Post-Masters of Fitchburg.*

Boston, daily, except Sunday, arrive at 9½ A. M., close at 4 P. M.

Worcester, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, arrive at 9½ A. M., close at 1 P. M.

Worcester, Monday, Wednesday and Friday, arrive at 2 P. M., close at 4 P. M.

Brattleboro', Monday, Wednesday and Friday, arrive at 4 P. M., close at 9½ A. M.

Greenfield, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, arrive at 4 P. M., close at 9½ A. M.

Nashua, Monday, Wednesday and Friday, arrive at 4 P. M., close at 9½ A. M.

Walpole, daily, arrive at 4 P. M., close at 9½ A. M.

Leominster, daily, arrive at 9½ A. M., close at 4 P. M.

Shirley Village, Monday, Wednesday and Friday, arrive at 7½ A. M., close at 4 P. M.

The railroad time table was as follows at this date :

Cars arrive at 9½ A. M., 4½ and 7½ P. M.

Cars leave at 6½ and 10 A. M., and 4½ P. M.

The year 1845 saw a revolution in the service. On the night of March 3, 1845, the last day of Tyler's administration, the following law was passed by congress :

"For every single letter in manuscript, or paper of any kind,—by and upon which information shall be asked for or communicated in writing, or by marks and signs,—conveyed in the mail for any distance under three hundred miles, five cents; for any distance over three hundred miles, ten cents."

This went into effect on July 1, 1845, the great reduction causing a shaking of heads among the doubters, and the prophecy that the measure would bankrupt the country. What would have been thought if they had been informed that, in less than forty years, a small red stamp of the value of two cents would be sufficient to carry a letter weighing an ounce across the continent to any part of the country, Canada, or Mexico? In 1845 the one-half ounce weight was made the standard, instead of the number of sheets.

In 1845-6 the new brick block erected by Postmaster Nathaniel Wood and the Hon. Ebenezer Torrey, at the corner of Main and Central streets, was built, and the post-office was removed thereto, with Shepley's bookstore, Mr. Shepley continuing in charge.

In 1846-7 the Vermont and Massachusetts and Cheshire railroads were opened, and the postal facilities were further extended.

The first postage stamps were issued in August, 1847. The *Sentinel* says: "Postage stamps, as all of our readers know, are sometimes difficult to fasten on letters without the aid of extra paste. A writer, who was evidently unaccustomed to the use of stamps and failed to make one stick, tried and vainly tried, but the inveterate portrait of Benjamin Franklin would 'curl up.' At last he pinned it to the envelope, and wrote just under it, 'Paid, if the — thing sticks.'" A comparison between the facilities enjoyed in the first and last years of Postmaster Wood's long service shows a great advance, but a suggestion of the "fast mail train" of the present day, by which a letter can go from the Atlantic to the Pacific in less than five days, would have subjected the prophet to the greatest ridicule, as it would have been pronounced impossible.

The reduction of postage to three cents, prepaid, or five cents if not prepaid, for not exceeding three thousand miles, with the introduction of postage stamps, increased the use of the mail by the people, both for social and business correspondence, and brought about great business activity throughout the country. And for the year 1850, the gross receipts of the Fitchburg office reached the sum of \$2,761.54. The *Reveille* of July 13, 1853, says:

"The new United States stamped envelopes have made their appearance. They are spoken of as a rather inferior article. But what causes the greatest dissatisfaction is the fact that Mr. Nesbit, the executor, has made use of the flaps to advertise his own business."

Mr. Wood was, for nearly fifty years, one of the most prominent citizens of Fitchburg, and was characterized during that whole period, for unswerving integrity and honesty. Among Postmaster Wood's assistants were his brother, Goodwin Wood, Charles and Stephen Shepley, and Charles Lamb.

He was succeeded by his law partner, Hon. Goldsmith F. Bailey, who died at the early age of thirty-seven, while serving this district as its honored representative in congress. He was appointed postmaster by President Fillmore, May 3, 1851. The office remained in the same location, and his assistant was John P. Jaquith.

"Mr. Bailey in an unusual degree won the confidence and esteem of all who knew him. He was a witty and agreeable companion, and a true-hearted, generous man; in business thorough, in thought clear and rapid, with an almost intuitive perception of the motives of men."

On May 4, 1853, President Pierce appointed John Todd, who took charge of the office July 1st.

The increasing population and business of the town demanded better accommodations for the post-office; and soon after the completion of the present city hall building, the office was removed to rooms which had been prepared for it, evidently much to the satisfaction of the public, judging by the following comments from the local papers.

The *Sentinel* of May 26, 1854, announced the intended removal, saying: "This step will afford ample accommodations, for which our citizens have long felt the need; the place where the office is at present kept is so small as to render it nearly impossible to gain an entrance at times, through the crowd waiting for the opening of the mails." The *Reveille* of May 27, 1854, says: "We are happy to inform our readers that the post-office has been removed to the town house, where there will be ample room for business but none for loafing."

A considerable addition was made in the number of letter boxes and other facilities for doing the work. Mr. Todd's assistant, Charles G. Giles, was practically acting postmaster, having full charge of the office, Mr. Todd devoting nearly all of his time to his law practice.

In 1854, after the removal to the new location, a time card shows two mails daily to Worcester and Boston, and one mail daily to Brattleboro', and also to Bellows Falls. During the next year a third mail per day was secured to Boston. These have since been increased until at the present time there are seven mails per day to Boston.

At this time much of the postage was not prepaid, prepayment not being compulsory. Letters for each town were required to be tied up in a piece of wrapping paper and the destination written thereon. A way bill accompanied it, giving the items and amounts of unpaid postage, requiring a considerable amount of labor for the business transacted. As great economy was practiced, to keep down expenses, the wrappers were turned and the strings saved and used several times. Sometimes confusion was caused by an old address getting on the outside of a package.

During Mr. Todd's term Henry O. Putnam, Esq., the first letter carrier in Fitchburg, delivered the mail to a considerable number of houses, (especially in the lower part of the city,) many days delivering over one hundred letters to his patrons, and receiving a cent for each letter delivered.

It is worthy of note, that the veteran S. W. A. Stevens, who received his appointment as postmaster at South Gardner the same month as Postmaster Todd, is still in the service, having held the position for over forty years, a record equalled by only nineteen other postmasters in the United States.

For many years, until the introduction of the letter carriers in 1884, a private post-office was kept at the "Old City Drug Store," under the American House, having, at one time, over four hundred box holders,—the mails being carried to and from the post-office by the clerks of the store,—and was a great convenience to the residents of the "Old City."

Mr. Giles, in relating many reminiscences to the writer, mentioned the old office safe, which was of so little reliability that they were accustomed, during an "epidemic of burglaries" in this vicinity, to place their supply of stamps, etc., under the stock of wrapping paper for greater security, and, as he expressed it, "they were always found all right the next morning."

In 1857 Mr. Todd resigned, on account of removal to New York, and Joseph W. Mansur was appointed postmaster by President Buchanan, January 21, 1857. His assistants were Mr. Giles and Henry Allison.

From the *Sentinel* of July 1, 1858, we clip the following description of the first street letter-boxes in some of the larger cities:

"A new contrivance, consisting of a neat cast-iron box which fits around an ordinary lamp-post, (in such a manner as to be rather an ornament to the post,) and which cannot be removed by any unauthorized person, as it completely surrounds the post. It is constructed to be water, thief and fire proof, and letters deposited in the aperture at the top of the box remain safely until removed by the proper agent of the post-office. This contrivance, in conjunction with paid stamps, brings the post-office almost to every man's door."

The salary of the postmaster, as re-established January 1, 1860, was \$1,727.26. The gross receipts of the office for the year 1860 amounted to \$4,196.83.

In 1860 an unsuccessful attempt was made to burglarize the post-office, the robbers being disturbed in their work and securing nothing of value, an entrance to the safe not having been made.

Mr. Mansur was reappointed by President Buchanan, February 21, 1861, but was removed by President Lincoln, who appointed Judge T. K. Ware, September 4, 1861. He was reappointed by President Johnson, July 26, 1866. Among his assistants were Henry Allison, Gen. J. W. Kimball and Andrew Jewett. At this time, to the other work of the office was added the sale of the internal revenue stamps, which were then required to be affixed to legal papers of all kinds, checks, receipts, deeds, mortgages, insurance policies, etc., a collection of which forms an interesting feature in the stamp collectors' albums of the present day.

Judge Ware was removed by President Johnson, and Col. George E. Goodrich was appointed October 16, 1866, and reappointed by President Grant, March 3, 1871, and for a third term, February 25, 1875. His assistants were Alfred A. Marshall and Charles E. Wallace.

The whole number of postage stamps sold at the Fitchburg office in 1869 was 274,481. In 1889 it was more than three times as many, showing the increase of business. Owing to the rapid growth of the town, the receipts of the office increased nearly one hundred and fifty per cent. for the ten years ending 1870, for which year the gross receipts amounted to \$11,733.79.

It is worthy of note that, of the first fifty-five years after the establishment of the office, for fifty years the postmaster was a member of the Worcester county bar.

In 1872 the organization of the new city government forced the removal of the office from quarters in the town house. The only available building was found in the recently purchased Trinitarian church property of John M. Carpenter, at the corner of Main and Church streets, which was leased by the post-office department, and Mr. Carpenter remodeled the building, fitting up a part of the former audience room for the post-office, and providing a

new outfit of boxes and equipments; and on its removal to the new quarters, November 18, 1872, the facilities compared well with any other place of the same population.

The first postal cards were received here May 27, 1873; 52,500 were sold the first year.

In 1875 a change in the postage rate for newspapers relieved the office of a large amount of work. Until that time, for many years, a list of the regular subscribers to all publications had to be kept and, on the first of each quarter, the postage collected from each subscriber, varying according to the frequency of publication from five cents per quarter for once a week, ten cents for twice, fifteen cents for tri-weekly, to thirty cents for daily; weekly newspapers in the county of publication being exempt from postage. This was abolished in 1875 when the rate to publishers was established, and postage paid by them.

On the expiration of Postmaster Goodrich's third term, President Hayes appointed Gen. John W. Kimball, February 10, 1879, and he was reappointed by President Arthur, February 7, 1883. His assistant was Charles E. Wallace. The gross receipts for the year 1880 amounted to \$17,139.72.

On the expiration of the lease, in 1881, the demand for increased space for the office was obtained by lowering the floor to the level of the street, and the removal of the stores from the building,—the post-office occupying the entire first story,—doing away with the stairs, and greatly improving the working space of the office. During the alterations, the store in Spaulding's building, at the corner of Main and Grove streets, was temporarily occupied.

On October 1, 1883, the postage rate was reduced to two cents, which diminished the receipts of the office, but the gross receipts having reached the \$20,000 per year required, the office was made a free delivery office in 1884,

through the efforts of prominent citizens of the city. Postmaster Kimball received over one hundred applications for appointment as letter carrier. Persons in all conditions of health and with a wide range as to age, were candidates,—the labor and exposure of the service being very little understood. He selected A. S. Pierce, G. M. Bowker, P. B. Purtill, E. Forest and C. F. Lamb, and on November 1, 1884, they commenced the service, in which, as has been well said, "they are everybody's visitors but nobody's guests;" and often not even one's best friends are more anxiously looked for and so gladly welcomed as the letter carrier on his daily rounds. The gray-coated postman with his swinging step, his brown mail-bag slung over his shoulder, with his packet of letters and many shaped bundles and papers, is not only one of the most familiar sights, but one of the most interesting on our city streets;—the eye kindles, the heart beats with expectancy and anxiety, and the foot runs swiftly with his approach to our doors.

The establishment of the letter-carrier system has largely done away with the post-office of former days, and "going to the post-office" has ceased to be a part of the duties or habit of a large majority of our permanent dwellers. This change rendered unnecessary a large number of the call boxes, and the arrangement of the office was very much changed, to fit it for the new system.

October 1, 1885, the special delivery system was introduced, and has grown to be an important branch of the office.

For the year 1885 the gross receipts of the office reached the sum of \$20,470.43.

On the expiration of Postmaster Kimball's second term, Frederick A. Currier was appointed by President Cleveland, February 22, 1887. Many improvements were made in the arrangement of the interior of the office,



adding to the convenience for the transaction of the business and the accommodation of the public.

September 1, 1887, an additional letter carrier was secured, and F. J. Dwyer was appointed. August 1, 1888, two additional carriers were allowed, and F. W. Abbott and N. C. Upham were selected, and August 1, 1890, one more carrier was secured, and F. E. Bruce was appointed to the position.

July 1, 1890, an inner registered sack exchange was established between Fitchburg and Boston, which does away with the handling of all registered letters between these points by the railway mail clerks on the most important trains. In August, 1890, a supply of the new street boxes for papers and bundles were secured and placed at convenient points.

On January 27, 1890, Hon. Rodney Wallace introduced a bill in congress for the erection of a public building in Fitchburg, at a cost of \$100,000, and it was referred to the proper committee.

For the year 1890 937,033 postage stamps, 226,425 postal cards, and 364,510 stamped envelopes were sold, and the net receipts above all expenditures were \$15,887.10 a sum nearly equal to the entire receipts of the office only ten years previous.

On February 13, 1891, President Harrison appointed Charles E. Wallace as postmaster, who selected Albert H. Harris as his assistant. An additional letter carrier was allowed on August 1, 1892, making the present number ten,—Charles F. Lamb being appointed.

In 1891 Hon. F. S. Coolidge introduced a bill in congress for a post-office building in Fitchburg; it was referred to the committee, who, on June 9, 1892, made the following report:

“Fitchburg is one of the most prosperous of the small manufacturing cities of Massachusetts. Its population of less than fourteen thous-

and in 1880, has grown to about twenty-two thousand in 1890, while the postal receipts for the year 1891 were \$29,775, of which \$13,879 was net income above expenses; the extraordinary ratio of postal receipts to population being here, as almost invariably, an index to the activity and enterprise of its business interests. The extent of the public business in Fitchburg justifies, and public convenience in transacting it requires, the erection of a public building in Fitchburg."

It, however, failed to be reached in the calendar before the adjournment of congress.

On January 16, 1893, President Harrison extended the civil service rules to all letter-carrier offices, and on April 7, 1893, the Fitchburg office came under the rules, and all appointments for clerks or letter carriers are now selected from those who pass the examination required by the civil service rules.

The postal receipts of the office for the year ending July 1, 1893, amounted to \$35,173.69, and the money order department handled over \$100,000.

There are sixty-one street letter boxes and five package boxes, from which one to eight collections are made daily, and there is a Sunday afternoon collection from the Main street boxes. In the principal business districts the carriers make from three to five delivery trips, and most of the dwelling house section is visited twice per day. It is estimated that the number of pieces handled by the office exceeds three millions per year.

In 1849 a post-office was established at West Fitchburg, Leonard C. Sanborn being the first postmaster, and the office was located in the store now owned by Henry J. Lacey, which was then occupied by Thomas Clark. In 1853 Harrington Sibley was appointed postmaster, and the office was removed to Calvin Wallace's shoe store, in the other half of the same building. Mr. Wallace had charge of the work of the office for Mr. Sibley. On his

closing out his business in 1857 Mr. Sibley erected a small building near the brick dwelling occupied by him near the old location, which has since been removed and forms a part of the dwelling now in the junction of the road opposite the Lacey store.

January 1, 1865, William Baldwin, who had purchased the store of Mr. Clark, was appointed postmaster, and removed the post-office to his store, where it remained during his long incumbency of the position. June 13, 1884, he was succeeded by Henry J. Lacey, who had purchased the store. Mr. Lacey had previously been postmaster in Connecticut. A change of administration brought a new appointment, and Oct. 26, 1885, John F. Shea succeeded him; he removed the office to a new building nearer the railroad.

On January 29, 1890, Thomas A. Monahan was appointed, and removed the office to its present location in Putney's block.

During Mr. Sibley's term a movement looking to the removal of the office farther west, toward Waite's Corner, was agitated. Mr. Sibley requested that, if the matter was presented to the department, an opportunity be given to explain the situation. He was some time later, as he expressed it, advised that there was a movement for a change of postmaster; he laughingly replied that it was not the removal of the postmaster he objected to, but the location of the office, which should be where it would accommodate the most people, but no change was made, and it has remained within a short distance of its first location ever since.

A new office was established at South Fitchburg, February 2, 1889, and Willard Stowell was appointed postmaster. The office was opened February 20, and has continued in its present location from its establishment.

## FITCHBURG'S RESPONSE TO THE LEXINGTON ALARM.

*Read at a meeting of the Society, April 18, 1892.*

BY J. F. D. GARFIELD.

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Our meeting this evening marks the anniversary of the ride of Paul Revere, when he carried the midnight message

“Through every Middlesex village and farm  
For the country folk to be up and to arm.”

A body of British soldiers, eight hundred strong, was on its way out of Boston on a midnight marauding excursion into the country. It was important that something should be done. The precise destination of the king's soldiers was unknown, but the country people were not slow to surmise that their objective point was Concord;—for at Concord it was well known there was one of the largest deposits of military stores which “the Province of Massachusetts had collected in its preparations against the British Empire.” The people of Concord, however, were on the alert, having been notified of the probable visit, and the stores were being conveyed, so far as possible, to places of safety.

On arriving at Lexington the army of red-coats found the Lexington company in line on the common. Captain Parker, their leader, had cautioned his men not to fire upon the English troops unless they were fired upon;—but he added, “If they are determined to have war, let it begin here.” It is matter of history that they were fired

upon, eight of their number were killed; they returned the fire, and then and there the war, indeed, began. Adams and Hancock, who had been stopping at Parson Clarke's in Lexington, had been warned of the approach of the troops and persuaded to retire to safer quarters. From the neighboring hills they heard the firing, and saw the smoke rising over Lexington common, when Adams, with the voice of a seer, exclaimed, "Oh, what a glorious day is this for America!" As the Lexington men retired from the scene of the attack, the regulars, elated with their victory, fired another volley, gave three cheers, and then pushed on to Concord.

At Concord, after posting guards at different points, they proceeded in their work of destruction. Such of the military stores as they could find were destroyed, and some buildings were fired. The Concord militia, under Col. Barrett, had formed on the high ground near the town, and the minute men from the adjoining towns were pouring in and joining the Concord forces. A body of the English had been stationed at the north bridge. In the opinion of these farmer-soldiers the bridge was a part of the king's highway, and should not be obstructed. Captain Smith, of Lincoln, offered to take his company and dislodge the party at the bridge, and Captain Davis, of Acton, made the remark—"There is not a man of my company that is afraid to go." Colonel Barrett ordered the column to cross the bridge, and placed Major Buttrick in command; but, with a passion for law, and a determination not to appear to be the aggressors, again the order was given not to fire unless they were fired upon. When they were within a few rods of the bridge the English fired, and Captain Davis and Abner Hosmer fell. Then the order was given, and

"The embattled farmers stood  
And fired the shot heard round the world."

The regulars retired with one killed and several wounded, and the Provincials pursued them over the bridge. They soon returned to their former position, carrying with them the remains of the gallant Davis and Hosmer. Col. Smith, in command of the English troops, now gathered his forces together and soon started on his return to Boston. The world is familiar with the story of their disastrous rout, and their narrow escape from entire capture.

While these stirring events were occurring at Lexington and Concord, intelligence of the hostile march of the British troops was spreading rapidly through the country. In every direction swift couriers had been speeding, announcing that the Lexington militia had been fired upon. The minute men of the neighboring towns were promptly on the march. All Middlesex and Essex was in arms, and the news was flying on to sections more remote. Even while the action at Concord bridge was in progress, the minute men of the towns of Worcester north were hurrying from field and workshop at the sound of the drum, the signal gun, or the ringing of bells.

Torrey says the alarm reached Fitchburg at nine o'clock on the morning of the 19th. By whom brought—by what messenger, galloping through the morning hours, the summons to arms was proclaimed—neither history nor tradition vouchsafe to tell. It is known, however, that he came in accordance with well matured plans, and that his coming was not wholly unexpected by the people. When the tidings came signal guns were fired in front of the store of Deacon Ephraim Kimball—near the site of the stone mill of J. Cushing & Co. Quickly, answering echoes were heard from the surrounding hills, followed by hurrying footsteps of the patriots in response to the call. Deacon Kimball's store was the appointed rallying place of the minute men, where their guns and equipments were

kept, ready for instant use. The company had spent the previous day at drill. With hasty farewells at home they promptly assembled at the appointed place, and the company, numbering forty-two men, under Captain Ebenezer Bridge, took up their line of march for the scene of conflict, ready to vindicate, at the expense of their lives if need be, the great principles of freedom and the rights of the colonies.

Besides Captain Bridge's company of minute men, a company of militia numbering twenty-nine, under Captain Ebenezer Woods, set out at once for the scene of action. This organization was probably made up of the older citizens of the town, many of whom were, perhaps, veterans of the French and Indian wars. Torrey fails to note the fact that Fitchburg sent forth two companies on that eventful day. Fortunately, the rolls of the two, preserved in the archives of the Commonwealth, afford reliable evidence of the marching of both companies on the 19th, and give full particulars of the time of service and the pay awarded to each man.

Seventy-one names appear on the rolls of the two companies of the men who marched from Fitchburg on the memorable 19th. A commissary wagon loaded with provisions for the men was sent forward under the care of Thomas Cowdin, Jr. Elijah Garfield marched with the Leominster company under Captain David Wilder, and John Gibson joined the company from Ashby under the command of Captain John Jones,—making seventy-four Fitchburg men, who responded to the Lexington alarm, at an hour's notice from this, then new and sparsely settled town.

Complete copies of the rolls of the two companies are given herewith:

CAPT. EBENEZER BRIDGE'S MUSTER ROLL IN COL. JOHN WHITCOMB'S REG'T  
OF MINUTE MEN THAT MARCHED FROM FITCHBURG TO CAMBRIDGE ON YE  
ALARM APRIL 19TH, 1775.

MEN'S NAMES.	Time when marched.	Time when left the place of rendezvous	Days ser- vice.	Pay for service.	Number of miles.	Travel'g expenses	Total sum for service and travl'g expenses.
Eben'r Bridge, Capt.	April 19,	April 25	6	£1- 5-8 $\frac{3}{4}$	—	—	£1- 5-8 $\frac{3}{4}$
Joseph Fox, Lt.	do	May 6	19	2-14-3 $\frac{3}{4}$	47 miles.	7-10	3- 2- 1 $\frac{3}{4}$
Wm. Thurlo, do.	do	May 4	15	1-17-6	do	7-10	2- 5- 4
Dan'l Putnam, Ens'n,	do	May 2	13	1- 7-10	do	7-10	1-15- 4
Eph'm Osborn, Serg't,	do	May 4	15	1- 2-3 $\frac{1}{2}$	do	7-10	1-10- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$
John Burs, do	do	April 27	9	0-15-5	do	7-10	1- 8- 3
Jona. Holt, do	do	May 3	14	1- 4- —	do	7-10	1-11-10
Jona. Hunt, do	do	April 25	6	0-10-3 $\frac{1}{2}$	—	—	0-10- 3 $\frac{1}{2}$
Edw'd Hartwell, Corp'l,	do	April 25	6	0- 9-5 $\frac{1}{2}$	—	—	0- 9- 5 $\frac{1}{2}$
Abra Farwell, do	do	May 2	13	1- 0-5 $\frac{1}{2}$	47 miles.	7-10	1- 8- 3 $\frac{1}{2}$
Paul Wetherbee, do	do	May 2	13	1- 0-5 $\frac{1}{2}$	do	7-10	1- 8- 3 $\frac{1}{2}$
Eph'm Hartwell, Fifer,	do	May 4	15	1- 3-6 $\frac{3}{4}$	do	7-10	1-11- 4 $\frac{3}{4}$
Joseph Polley, private,	do	April 25	6	0- 8-7	—	—	0- 8- 7
Thomas Gary, do	do	do	6	0- 8-7	—	—	0- 8- 7
Nath. Gibson, do	do	do	6	0- 8-7	—	—	0- 8- 7
Wm. Bean, do	do	do	6	0- 8-7	—	—	0- 8- 7
Joseph Gilson, do	do	do	6	0- 8-7	—	—	0- 8- 7
Eben'r Polley, do	do	do	6	0- 8-7	—	—	0- 8- 7
Sam'l Down, do	do	do	6	0- 8-7	—	—	0- 8- 7
Jona. Gibson, do	do	do	6	0- 8-7	—	—	0- 8- 7
Daniel Harris, do	do	do	6	0- 8-7	—	—	0- 8- 7
Stephen Bayley, do	do	do	6	0- 8-7	—	—	0- 8- 7
John Goodridge, do	do	do	6	0- 8-7	—	—	0- 8- 7
Joseph Farwell, do	do	do	6	0- 8-7	—	—	0- 8- 7
Thomas Platts, do	do	do	6	0- 8-7	—	—	0- 8- 7
Roger Biglow, do	do	do	6	0- 8-7	—	—	0- 8- 7
John Wasson, do	do	do	6	0- 8-7	—	—	0- 8- 7
Joseph Down, do	do	April 26	8	0-11-4	47 miles.	7-10	0-19- 2
William Small, do	do	May 9	13	0-18-7	do	7-10	1- 6- 5
Edw'd Elsworth, do	do	May 2	13	0-18-7	do	7-10	1- 6- 5
Jona. Wetherbe, do	do	April 22	4	0- 5-8	do	7-10	0-13- 6
John Thurston, do	do	April 24	6	0- 8-7	do	7-10	0-16- 5
Joshua Pearce, do	do	May 2	13	0-18-7	do	7-10	1- 6- 5
James Wood, do	do	May 4	15	1- 1-5	do	7-10	1- 9- 3
Levi Farwell, do	do	May 2	13	0-18-7	do	7-10	1- 6- 5
Timo. Fullam, do	do	May 5	16	1- 2-10	do	7-10	1-10- 8
Solomon Hartwell, do	do	May 3	14	1- — —	do	7-10	1- 7-10
Nicholas Danforth, do	do	May 2	13	0-18-7	do	7-10	1- 6- 5
Aaron Hodgkins, do	do	April 30	11	0-15-8	do	7-10	1- 3- 6
Thomas Kimball, do	do	May 2	13	0-18-7	do	7-10	1- 6- 5
James Walker, do	do	May 2	13	0-18-7	do	7-10	1- 6- 5
David Pearce, do	do	May 2	13	0-18-7	do	7-10	1- 6- 5

£43- 1- 2-3

(Signed)

EBENEZER BRIDGE, CAPT.

COLONY MASSACHUSETTS BAY, Jan'y 25th, 1776.

Ebenezer Bridge made solemn oath that this roll by him subscribed is true in all its parts according to ye best of his knowledge.

Before MOSES GILL, Jus. Peace thro' ye Colony.

IN COUNCIL, Jan. 30, 1776. Read and allowed & ordered that a warrant be drawn on the Treas. for £43-1-2 $\frac{3}{4}$  in full for the within roll.

JOHN LOWELL, Dep. Sec'y, P. T.

WATERTOWN, Jan. 29, 1776. The Committee appointed to examine Muster Rolls do hereby certify that this is a true copy of the orig'l'e.

MICHAEL FARLEY, } Committee.  
EDWARD RAWSON, }



**CAPT. EBENEZER WOODS' MUSTER ROLL IN COL. ASA WHITCOMB'S REGIMENT OF  
THE MILITIA THAT MARCHED FROM FITCHBURG ON THE ALARM APRIL ye 19,  
1775.**

MEN'S NAMES.	When marched.	When returned.	Days ser- vice.	Pay for service.	No. miles.	Travel'g expenses	Total sum serv. & trav. exp.
Eben'r Woods, Capt.	April 19,	Eng'd Apr. 25	6	1- 5- 7-2	- -		1- 5- 7-2
Kendall Boutell, Lieut.	do	Ret'd May 1	13	1-17- 3-3	47	7-10	2- 5- 1-3
Asa Perry, 2d Lieut.	do	" April 24	6	-15-	47	7-10	1- 2-10-
Joseph Adams, Serj.	do	" " 24	6	-10- 3-1	47	7-10	-18- 1-1
Reuben Gibson, do.	do	" " 29	11	-18-10-	47	7-10	1- 6- 8-
John Farwell, Corp.	do	" " 24	6	- 9- 5-	47	7-10	-17- 5-
Levi Kimball, Drum	do	" May 1	13	1- 0- 8-1	47	7-10	1- 8- 6-1
Joseph Polley, Fifer	do	" " 6	13	1- 2- 5-1	47	7-10	1-16- 3-1
Thomas Hartwell,	do	" " 1	13	-18- 7-	47	7-10	1- 6- 5-1
Isaac Gibson,	do	" April 29	11	-15- 8-1	47	7-10	1- 3- 6-1
Reuben Gibson,	do	" " 24	6	- 8- 6-3	47	7-10	-16- 8-3
Asahel Hartwell,	do	" " 30	12	-17- 1-2	47	7-10	1- 4-11-2
Samuel Peirce,	do	" " 26	8	-11- 4-3	47	7-10	-19- 2-2
Oliver Davis,	do	" " 26	8	-11- 4-3	47	7-10	-19- 2-2
Asaph Goodridge,	do	" May 1	13	-18- 6-	47	7-10	1- 6- 4-
Kendall Bancroft,	April 22,	" April 30	9	-12- 9-3	47	7-10	1- 0- 7-3
Thomas Harris,	April 19,	Eng'd Ap. 25	6	- 8- 7-	- -		- 8- 7-
Samuel Harris,	do	Ret'n'd " 23	5	- 7- 1-3	47	7-10	-14-11-3
Oliver Upton,	do	" " 26	8	-11- 4-3	47	7-10	-19- 2-2
Joseph Spofford,	do	" " 24	6	- 8- 6-3	47	7-10	-16- 4-3
Abraham Hager,	do	Eng'd Ap. 25	6	- 8- 7-	- -		- 8- 7-
Jona'n Cummings,	do	Ret'n'd " 29	11	-15- 8-2	47	7-10	1- 3- 6-2
Amos Kimball,	do	" " 30	12	-17- 1-2	47	7-10	1- 4-11-2
Abraham Gibson,	do	" " 25	7	-10-	47	7-10	-17-10-
Joseph Symonds,	do	Eng'd " 25	6	- 8- 7-	- -		- 8- 7-
John Bancroft,	do	Ret'n'd " 26	8	-11- 4-3	47	7-10	-19- 2-2
David Mackintier,	do	" May 2	13	-18- 6-	47	7-10	1- 6- 4-
John Gibson,	do	" Apr. 26	8	-11- 4-3	47	7-10	-19- 2-2
Benj. Herrick,	April 21,	Eng'd Apr. 24	4	- 5- 8-1	- -		- 5- 8-1

£30-10-8

EBEN. WOODS, CAPT'N.

COLONY OF MASSACHUSETTS BAY, December 28, 1775. Capt. Eben. Woods made oath to the truth of the above roll by him subscribed according to the best of his knowledge.  
Before S. HOLTEN, Jus. Peace thro' ye Colony.

The Committee appointed to examine Muster Rolls have compared this with the original and find it agrees therewith.

EDWARD RAWSON, } Committee.  
SAML MOODY, }

IN COUNCIL, Feb. 13, 1776. Read & allowed & ordered that a warrant be drawn on the Treas'r for £30.10.8 in full of the within Roll. PEREZ MORTON, Dp. Sec'y.

The anxiety which must have prevailed in town at the departure of the companies can only be imagined. A very large proportion of the able-bodied men had gone forth, at the shortest notice, to encounter dangers they knew not how great,—the strength and design of the enemy being for the time veiled in uncertainty. But it was

too late for any backward step, had any thought of such been conceived. The acts of tyranny and oppression of the mother country had been thoroughly discussed. Months before, the voters of the town had pledged themselves that they would not be found wanting, according to their ability, in promoting all lawful and constitutional measures for the maintenance of their rights and privileges, civil and religious. A committee, of which both Captain Bridge and Captain Woods were members, presented a report which was accepted by the town, wherein they resolved to "stand fast in the liberty and rights wherewith they had been made free—fully persuaded that liberty is a most precious gift of God to all mankind, that no man or number of men can have a right to exercise despotism or tyranny over their fellow creatures; and they considered it their indispensable duty, as men, as Englishmen and as Christians, to make the most public declaration in their power on the side of liberty." "We have, indeed," say they, "an ambition to be known to the world and to posterity as friends of liberty, and to use all proper means to promote it."

It was in vindication of such sentiments that the men went forth on the 19th of April. The time had now come for words to crystallize into deeds. They were eager to prove the sincerity of their declaration that they would defend their liberties at the expense of all that was dear to them. They did not fail to make their actions correspond with their professions,—and from that day forward their laudable ambition to be known to the world and to posterity as friends of liberty was an accomplished fact.

Few towns with such a limited population can boast of a more patriotic rally; and though their distance from the scene of conflict prevented them from sharing the dangers of the day, the prompt response and rapid march of the Fitchburg men prove their devotion to the cause of

their country. It is this devotion to the cause of freedom that gives dignity and beauty to the story of their valor. It is due to these men that their names and the record of their deeds should be handed down to posterity.

Under other circumstances,—with actors animated by less worthy motives,—it has been truly said, the events of Concord and Lexington might, for a brief period, have been the theme of the fireside tale in the region round about, and awakened the momentary interest and sympathy of childhood, only to be forgotten by succeeding generations. “Now, the same events preface the history of a nation and the beginning of an empire; and are themes of disquisition and astonishment to the civilized world.”

The Fitchburg men reached Concord during the evening of the 19th, by which time the decimated ranks of the British troops were safely intrenched on Bunker Hill. After spending the night at Concord the patriot band continued their march to Cambridge, where they joined the ranks of those who fought the British on their way from Concord, and who had already commenced the memorable siege of Boston.

The necessity of reorganizing this large body of undisciplined men, into an army for active service, became at once apparent. The minute companies were soon disbanded, and enlisting began in earnest. In the reorganization which followed Captain Bridge's company was consolidated with that of Captain Fuller of Lunenburg, making a company of sixty-two men, of whom twenty-three were from Fitchburg, and the balance from Lunenburg. The term of enlistment was eight months. John Fuller of Lunenburg was commissioned captain; Ebenezer Bridge of Fitchburg, first lieutenant; Jared Smith of Lunenburg, second lieutenant; Jonathan Hunt and Edward Hartwell of Fitchburg, sergeants; and Thomas Gary of Fitchburg, corporal. John Wasson of Fitchburg was fifer.

A part of Captain Woods' Fitchburg company united with Captain Burt's company of Harvard,—Captain Woods taking a commission as lieutenant,—while many from all the companies soon returned to their homes.

The number of inhabitants at the incorporation of Fitchburg is estimated at not over two hundred and sixty. In 1790, according to the first United States census, the population numbered eleven hundred and fifty-one. Taking these figures as a guide, it is safe to estimate the number of inhabitants in 1775 at not over seven hundred, at the outside.

Our venerable associate, Alonzo P. Goodridge, has an interesting Revolutionary manuscript which contains a list of Fitchburg names under the two heads, "Alarm List" and "Training Band." The paper contains one hundred and seventy-two names, which doubtless comprised all the male inhabitants in town of military age at the time it was prepared;—but unfortunately it bears no date.\* Thirty-six of the men named in this paper were in the ranks of one or the other of the Fitchburg companies that marched on the 19th of April. A document on file the State house shows that there were in the town, in 1778, one hundred and sixty-nine male inhabitants sixteen years old and upwards, including those in the service. This agrees, substantially, with Mr. Goodridge's paper. One-seventh of this number, or twenty-four men, was regarded as the quota of the town.

It is worthy of note that with such a limited number capable of military duty, there appear on the records of

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\*There are reasons for assigning the year 1782 as the probable date of Mr. Goodridge's document. First, it contains no less than eleven names which appear in the tax list of the town for the first time in 1781; second, it has the name of Ebenezer Bridge, Jr., who appears by the town record to have been born in 1766. He would be sixteen years of age in 1782, and consequently first subject to military duty in that year.

the Commonwealth the names of upwards of one hundred and forty different Fitchburg men who served for longer or shorter periods during the war. With such a record, Fitchburg may well be proud of the part taken by these founders of the town in the great struggle which resulted in the establishment of a new power among the nations.

“The history of the world does not present a more grand and imposing spectacle than that of the rising of the people on the 19th of April, 1775. It was not a restless population, actuated by blind impulse, without definite motive or design; not a hired soldiery, organized by some bold and daring leader, to avenge some personal wrong, or to embark in some mad scheme of conquest, in which the perils they bore would be repaid by plunder; nor was it a people goaded to desperation, or reduced to the last stages of despair by the iron heel of despotism, making their last mighty effort to throw off the yoke they could no longer endure;—but it was a cool, voluntary rising of a sedate and orderly, intelligent and conscientious people, who knew their rights, and ‘knowing dared maintain’ them;—a people bred to the right of private judgment and the equality of men, and who, seeing in their religious creed the great principles of civil as well as religious liberty, were determined to defend them whenever invaded, or whoever might be the aggressor. It was the spontaneous rising of a people who felt that they were set for the defense of American liberty, and were ready to offer their bodies a living sacrifice in the cause—realizing that ‘he can never die too soon who lays down his life in support of the laws and liberties of his country.’ ”

## LUNENBURG AND LEOMINSTER IN THE REVOLUTION.

*A Paper read at a meeting of the Society, May 16, 1892.*

BY J. F. D. GARFIELD.

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The Provincial Congress which convened in October, 1774, adopted a plan for organizing and maintaining the militia of the Colony, and for calling it out should occasion require. It provided that one-quarter of the number enrolled should be held in readiness for service at the shortest notice, and be organized, equipped and drilled at the expense of the several towns. These companies became known by the popular name of minute-men. "Alarm-List" companies were also organized, and money freely voted to arm and discipline them for efficient action. Citizens of every calling appeared in the ranks. "To be a private was considered an honor; and to be chosen to office was a mark of the highest distinction."

Lunenburg was at this period one of the most important and populous towns in the northern part of Worcester County. Her people had been bred amidst alarms, and had experienced the severe discipline of the French and Indian wars. As the crisis approached in the controversy with Great Britain, they were alive to the importance of preparing for the contest which, it was becoming more and more evident, could not long be delayed. In accordance with the measures recommended by the Provincial Congress, a minute company was organized, and early in January, 1775, a town meeting was held and money appropriated for the purchase of a supply of arms and munitions of war. The following extract, published

in the *Essex Gazette* of January 17, 1775, illustrates the spirit which prevailed in the community:

"On the 2d of this instant the minute company of the town of Lunenburg, consisting of fifty-seven able-bodied men, appeared in arms on the parade, at 10 o'clock A. M., and after going through the several military manœuvres, they marched to a public house where the officers had provided an elegant dinner for the company, a number of the respectable inhabitants of the town, and patriotic ministers of the towns adjacent. At two o'clock P. M. they marched in military procession to the meeting-house, where the Rev. Mr. Adams delivered an excellent sermon, suitable to the occasion, from Psalm xxvii: 3. The whole business of the day was performed with decency, order, and to the satisfaction of a very large number of spectators. On the day following, the freeholders and other inhabitants of the town assembled in legal town meeting, and voted £100, L. M., for the purpose of purchasing fire-arms with bayonets, and other implements of war, agreeable to the advice of the late Provincial Congress."

Just how many turned out from Lunenburg in answer to the alarm of April 19, 1775, cannot be definitely stated, as unfortunately the rolls are not all to be found; but it is undoubtedly true that a company left there immediately on the day of the alarm, under the command of Capt. John Fuller, and we know for a certainty that a company marched on the following day, consisting of sixty men, under the command of Capt. George Kimball.

After the battle of the 19th of April the militia companies were disbanded, with a view to a better organization of an army, and men were immediately enlisted for eight months' service. A company was made up of thirty-nine men from Lunenburg and twenty-three from Fitchburg, of which John Fuller of Lunenburg was made captain, and Ebenezer Bridge of Fitchburg lieutenant. Ten of the Lunenburg men were from the ranks of Capt. George Kimball's company, while the Fitchburg men were mostly from Capt. Bridge's company of minute-men.

The roll of Capt. Kimball's company is as follows:

COLONY OF THE MASSACHUSETTS BAY. A Muster Roll of a Company or Party of men that marched from Lunenburg on ye 20th of April, 1775, for the defense of this Colony against the ministerial troops, under the command of George Kimball, Capt. of a company in Lunenburg, who marched in consequence of an alarm made on the 19th of April, 1775.

MEN'S NAMES.	Number of miles travel.	What the travel is.	The number of days including the travel home.	What the number of days comes too.	The whole of what each man's service comes too.
		s. d.		£ s. d.	£ s. d.
George Kimball, Capt.	80	6-8	12	2-11-5	2-18-1
David Wood, 1st Lt.	80	6-8	11	1-11-7	1-18-1
Samuel Kimball, 2d Lt.	80	6-8	11	1-7-6	1-14-2
Boman Brown, Sergt.	80	6-8	10	0-17-6	1-3-10
John Searle, Sergt.	80	6-8	12	1-0-7	1-7-3
Benja. Darling, Sergt.	80	6-8	11	0-18-10	1-5-6
Samuel Hutchinson, Corp'l	80	6-8	12	0-18-10	1-5-6
Samuel Hilton, Corp'l	80	6-8	12	0-18-10	1-5-6
Daniel Holt, Corp'l	80	6-8	10	0-15-8	1-2-4
Barnabas Wood, Corp'l	80	6-8	10	0-15-8	1-2-4
David Chaplin, Drummer	80	6-8	10	0-15-8	1-2-4
Private Silas Gibson,	80	6-8	10	0-14-3	1-0-11
John Wood,	80	6-8	10	0-14-3	1-0-11
Abijah Page,	80	6-8	10	0-15-8	1-0-11
Nathan Johnson,	80	6-8	10	0-14-3	1-0-11
Isaac Bailey,	80	6-8	10	0-14-3	1-0-11
Andrew Mitchel,	80	6-8	10	0-14-3	1-0-11
Edward Richards,	80	6-8	11	0-14-3	1-2-4
Moses Sanderson,	80	6-8	10	0-14-3	1-0-11
Charles Gilchrest,	80	6-8	10	0-14-3	1-0-11
Pason Eaton,	80	6-8	10	0-14-3	1-0-11
John McCarty,	80	6-8	10	0-14-3	1-0-11
Benja. Redington,	80	6-8	5	0-7-1	0-13-9
William Prentice,	80	6-8	12	0-17-1	1-3-9
Jacob Stiels,	80	6-8	12	0-17-1	1-3-9
Salmon Hovey,	80	6-8	12	0-17-1	1-3-9
Eli Dodge,	80	6-8	6	8-6	0-15-2
Zebulon Wallis,	80	6-8	10	0-14-3	1-0-11
Moses Ritter,	80	6-8	5	0-7-1	0-13-9
Thomas Simonds,	80	6-8	9	0-12-9	0-19-5
David Houghton,	80	6-8	11	0-15-8	1-2-4
Jonathan Pierce,	80	6-8	5	0-7-1	0-13-9
Obadiah Walker,	50	4-2	3	0-4-3	0-8-5
William Gilchrest,	50	4-2	3	0-4-3	0-8-5
Jacob Sanderson,	50	4-2	3	0-4-3	0-8-5
John Dole,	50	4-2	3	0-4-3	0-8-5
Nehemiah Lane,	50	4-2	3	0-4-3	0-8-5
Nathaniel Hastings,	50	4-2	3	0-4-3	0-8-5
Joseph Hartwell,	50	4-2	3	0-4-3	0-8-5
Joshua Reed,	50	4-2	3	0-4-3	0-8-5
Benja. Goodridge,	50	4-2	3	0-4-3	0-8-5
Asa Carlton,	50	4-2	3	0-4-3	0-8-5
Amos Page,	50	4-2	3	0-4-3	0-8-5
Thomas Wetherbee,	50	4-2	3	0-4-3	0-8-5
Thaddeus Commings,	50	4-2	3	0-4-3	0-8-5
Phineas Divol,	50	4-2	3	0-4-3	0-8-5
Benoni Wallis,	50	4-2	3	0-4-3	0-8-5
George Henry,	50	4-2	3	0-4-3	0-8-5
John Little,	50	4-2	3	0-4-3	0-8-5
John Campbell,	50	4-2	3	0-4-3	0-8-5
Samuel Farrar, Sergeant	0	0-0	6	0-10-3	0-10-3
Joseph Foster,	0	0-0	6	0-8-7	0-8-5
Caleb Taylor,	0	0-0	6	0-8-7	0-8-5
Jeremiah Willard,	0	0-0	6	0-8-7	0-8-5
Curwen Wallis,	0	0-0	6	0-8-7	0-8-5
William Goodridge,	0	0-0	6	0-8-7	0-8-5
Samuel Johnson,	0	0-0	6	0-8-7	0-8-5
Joseph Priest,	0	0-0	6	0-8-7	0-8-5
Nathan Chapman,	0	0-0	6	0-8-7	0-8-5
Seth Herrington,	0	0-0	6	0-8-7	0-8-5

£49 5s. 9d.

MIDDLESEX ss. Jan'y 9th, 1776. Then George Kimball within named personally appeared & made Solemn Oath that in making the within Pay Roll he had acted faithfully and honestly according to the best of his skill & Judgment.

Before HENRY GARDNER, Jus. Peace.



The following is the roll of Capt. Fuller's company of eight-months men, as made up on the first of August, 1775.

A Muster Roll of the Company under the command of Capt. John Fuller in Col. Asa Whitcomb's Regiment to the first of August, 1775.

MEN'S NAMES.	Towns whehee they came.	Rank.	Time of Enlistment.	Travel.	Amt. at 1d. a mile.	Whole amount.
John Fuller,	Lunenburg,	Capt.	April ye 25	43m.	3- 7	21- 3- 7-0
Ebenezer Bridge,	Fitchburg,	Lieut.	"	47	3-11	14- 0-11-9
Jared Smith,	Lunenburg,	2 Lieut.	"	43	3- 7	12- 8- 7-0
Josiah Hartwell,	"	Sergeant	"	43	3- 7	8-11- 7-0
Jonathan Hunt,	Fitchburg,	do	"	47	3-11	8-11-11-0
Edward Hartwell,	"	do	"	47	3-11	8-11-11-0
Samuel Farrar,	Lunenburg,	do	"	43	3-11	8-11- 7-0
Thomas Garey,	Fitchburg,	Corporal	"	47	3-11	7-17-11-0
Ephraim Martin,	Lunenburg,	"	"	43	3- 7	7-17- 7-0
Samuel Litch,	"	"	"	43	3- 7	7-17- 7-0
John Welman,	"	"	"	43	3- 7	7-17- 7-0
John Wasson,	Fitchburg,	Fifer	"	47	3-11	7-17-11-0
Joseph Gilson,	"	Private	"	47	3-11	7- 3-11-0
Ebenezer Herington,	"	"	"	47	3-11	7- 3-11-0
Joseph Polley,	"	"	"	47	3-11	7- 3-11-0
Jonathan Taylor,	Lunenburg,	"	"	43	3- 7	7- 3- 7-0
Ellezer Priest,	"	"	"	43	3- 7	7- 3- 7-0
John Taylor,	"	"	"	43	3- 7	7- 3- 7-0
Derias Houghton,	"	"	"	43	3- 7	7- 3- 7-0
Solomon Boynton,	"	"	"	43	3- 7	7- 3- 7-0
Manassah Divol,	"	"	"	43	3- 7	7- 3- 7-0
Timothy Carlton,	"	"	"	43	3- 7	7- 3- 7-0
Francis Henry,	"	"	"	43	3- 7	7- 3- 7-0
Sewell Dodge,	"	"	"	43	3- 7	7- 3- 7-0
Benjamin Walker,	"	"	"	43	3- 7	7- 3- 7-0
Thos. Heseltine,	"	"	"	43	3- 7	7- 3- 7-0
Chever Fowler,	"	"	"	43	3- 7	7- 3- 7-0
Jonas Heseltine,	"	"	"	43	3- 7	7- 3- 7-0
David Wetherbee,	"	"	"	43	3- 7	7- 3- 7-0
Joseph Foster,	"	"	"	43	3- 7	7- 3- 7-0
Jeremiah Willard,	"	"	"	43	3- 7	7- 3- 7-0
Will'm Goodridge,	"	"	"	43	3- 7	7- 3- 7-0
Caleb Taylor,	"	"	"	43	3- 7	7- 3- 7-0
Charles Bailey,	"	"	"	43	3- 7	3- 0- 3-0
Henry Cokman,	"	"	May 21	43	3- 7	5- 5- 0-0
Sam'l Johnson,	"	"	April 25	43	3- 7	7- 3- 7-0
Curwin Wallis,	"	"	"	43	3- 7	7- 3- 7-0
Joseph Priest,	"	"	"	43	3- 7	7- 3- 7-0
Nathan Chapman,	"	"	"	43	3- 7	7- 3- 7-0
Eph'm Holden,	"	"	"	43	3- 7	7- 3- 7-0
Stephen Wimon,	"	"	"	43	3- 7	7- 3- 7-0
Abram Carlton,	"	"	"	43	3- 7	7- 3- 7-0
Abijah Goodridge,	"	"	"	43	3- 7	7- 3- 7-0
Nath'l Gibson,	Fitchburg,	"	"	47	3-11	7- 3-11-0
Will'm Bean,	"	"	"	47	3-11	7- 3-11-0
Ebenezer Polley,	"	"	"	47	3-11	7- 3-11-0
Sam'l Down,	"	"	"	47	3-11	7- 3-11-0
Jonathan Gibson,	"	"	"	47	3-11	7- 3-11-0
Daniel Harris,	"	"	"	47	3-11	7- 3-11-0
Stephen Bailey,	"	"	"	47	3-11	7- 3-11-0
Joseph Farwell,	"	"	"	47	3-11	7- 3-11-0
Thos. Plats,	"	"	"	47	3-11	7- 3-11-0
Roger Biglo,	"	"	"	47	3-11	7- 3-11-0
John Goodridge,	"	"	"	47	3-11	7- 3-11-0
Clark Bancroft,	"	"	May ye 20	47	3-11	5- 6- 9-0
Stephen Fuller,	"	"	June ye 2	47	3-11	4- 8- 2-0
Thos. Brooks Ball,	Concord,	"	May 26	15	1- 3	4-15- 5-0
Amos Hodgkins,	Fitchburg,	"	May ye 23	47	3-11	4-13-11-0
Thos. Kimball,	"	"	May 24	47	3-11	4-12- 6-0
James Carter,	Lunenburg,	"	April 25	43	3- 7	1-12- 2-0
Will'm Elexander,	"	"	"	43	3- 7	1-12- 2-0
Will'm Ritter,	"	"	"	43	3- 7	1-12- 2-0
Benj. Cleveland,	New Salem,	"	"	80	6- 8	1-15- 3-0
John Hill,	Lunenburg,	"	"	43	3- 7	1- 3- 7-0

Ex'd JABEZ FISHER.

IN COUNCIL, Jan. 25, 1776. Read and ord'd that a warrant be drawn on the Treas. for 329.15.3 in full for the within Roll.

PEREZ MORTON, Dep'y Sec'y.

Capt. Josiah Stearns of Lunenburg also recruited a company for eight months' service, largely from Lunenburg and Fitchburg, of which he was commissioned captain. The following names are taken from a return of Capt. Stearns' company dated at Winter Hill, Oct. 6, 1775:

Josiah Stearns, captain, Lunenburg,	Jonathan Holt, Fitchburg,
William Thurlo, lieutenant, Fitchburg,	William Hasselton, "
John Searls, sergeant, Lunenburg,	Ebenezer Houghton, Leominster,
Joshua Martin, sergeant, "	Asa Jones, Lunenburg,
Nathan Colburn, sergeant, "	John Moffitt, "
John Hall, corporal, "	William Prentiss, "
Jacob Steward, corporal, "	Thomas Peirce, "
Barnaby Wood, corporal, "	Francis Parker, Leominster,
Joseph Chaplin, drummer, "	John Ritter, Lunenburg,
Benjamin Bailey, "	John Stearns, "
John Brown, "	Joseph Simonds, "
William Clark, "	Jabez Stevens, Fitchburg,
Levi Dodge, "	William Stevens, Townsend,
James Darling, "	Moses Sanderson, Lunenburg,
Person Eaton, "	Aaron Taylor, "
Joseph Eaton, Ashby,	Reuben Willard, Fitchburg,
Nathaniel Evans, Leominster,	Seth Wyman, Lunenburg,
Ephraim Gibson, Ashby,	William Wyman, "
Thomas Gibson, Fitchburg,	Joab Wetherbee, "

In 1778 there were in the town of Lunenburg, according to a return made to the Secretary of the Commonwealth, two hundred and ninety-two male inhabitants, sixteen years of age and upwards, including those then in the service. One-seventh of this number, or forty-two men, was regarded as the quota of the town. With less than three hundred men in the town capable of military duty, there appear on the records of the Commonwealth the names of at least one hundred and ninety-four different Lunenburg men who performed military service at some time during the Revolution.

The following list of names of persons from Lunenburg who served in the Continental Army for a term of three years, or during the war, is gathered from documents preserved in the archives of the Commonwealth at Boston.

Benjamin Stearns,	Jonas Carter,	Primus Putnam,
Thaddeus Carter,	John Burrige,	Maximillian Willard,
Samuel Kendall,	Ephraim Martin,	John Willmon,
Nehemiah Lain,	Samuel Bathrick,	Ammi Harrington,
Joshua Goodridge,	Amos Page,	James Carter,
Amos Jones,	Eleazer Lain,	Charles Gilchrest,
Peter Davis,	Jotham Wheelock,	Phelin Tool,
Abner Mitchell,	Prince Taylor,	John Ritter,
Samuel Searle,	William Wyman,	Jewett Goodridge,
Aaron Taylor,	William Lord,	John Brown,
Joseph Moffett,	Seth Wyman,	Timothy Carlton,
Amos Harrington,	John Searls,	Joshua Saxton,
Zebulon Dodge,	Daniel Cole,	Amos Dodge,
William Moffett,	Asa Jones,	Benjamin Steward,
Eleazer Priest,	Elijah Putnam,	Stephen Fuller,
Joseph Wyman,	Jonathan Barrett,	Robert Hill,
Silas Davis,	William Snow,	Ebenezer Hart.

The names given below are of Lunenburg men who served for the terms specified. There were many enlistments for shorter periods,—from one to three months,—which are not given:

<b>ONE YEAR.</b>		
Benjamin Hartwell,	Thaddeus Carter,	Joseph Chaplin,
John Hartwell,	Samuel Kendall,	Josiah Peirce,
Samuel Hartwell,	Nehemiah Lain,	Samuel Hastings,
Amos Jones,	Joshua Goodridge,	David Pushua,
William Moffett,	Amos Jones,	Mitchell Richards,
Zephaniah Wood,	William Ritter,	Jonathan Gowen,
David Wyman.		Isaac Wetherbee,
	<b>EIGHT MONTHS.</b>	Robert Gilchrest,
	James Hovey.	Oliver Darling,
		William Moffett,
<b>NINE MONTHS.</b>	<b>SIX MONTHS.</b>	James Daniels,
Simon Smith,	Warff Rand,	Oliver Pratt,
David Fleming,	Eleazer Priest,	Nehemiah Lain,
David Pushua,	Francis Goodridge,	Jesse Wetherbee,
Joseph Goodrich,	John Whitcomb,	John Rice.
Ezra Ritter,	John Wright,	
James Darling,	Thomas French,	
Benjamin Steward,		

Leominster was in nowise behind her sister towns in activity and zeal for the patriot cause. Fully ten years previous to the Declaration of Independence her people gave expression to their views upon the subject of civil and religious liberty by adopting, in town-meeting, an address to the people of Boston, in which they state their position in no uncertain words. In the closing paragraph they say: "We cannot part with our creation rights." "We must, we can, and we will, be free;" and from that time onward, numerous votes are on record which prove their patriotism and their devotion to the cause of freedom. In 1774, after the closing of the port of Boston, the voters of the town resolved to steadfastly pursue such methods as should be recommended by the Provincial Congress, as "most likely to recover our just rights and privileges."

When the news from Lexington reached the town on the 19th of April, 1775, three companies of her citizens immediately responded to the call—one under the command of Capt. John Joslin of forty-one men, one under Capt. Joshua Woods of thirty-four men,\* and one under Capt. David Wilder numbering twenty-four men. Seven of the latter company were residents of Lunenburg. The population of Leominster at this time was less than one thousand, and the number of men capable of military duty but slightly, if any, over two hundred. Nearly one-half of this number, at sound of the alarm, dropped their implements of toil, seized their muskets, and took up their line of march for the scene of action.

The roll of Capt. Joslin's company is as follows:

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\*Neither Capt. Joslin's company, nor that of Capt. Woods, receives any mention in Wilder's History of Leominster, as having taken part in response to the alarm on the 19th of April.

This Roll contains the Travel and Service of Capt. John Joslin and the minute-men under his command in Col. John Whitcomb's Regiment, who in consequence of an Alarm on the nineteenth day of April last marched from Leominster in the County of Worcester to Cambridge for the defence of this Colony against the ministerial Troops.

	Miles travel.	For travel.	Days service.	For day service.	Total amount.
Capt. John Joslin,	80	6-8	11	2- 7-2	2-13-10
Lieut. Thomas Gary,	80	6-8	11	1-11-4	1-18- 0
2d " Phinehas Carter,	80	6-8	12	1-10-0	1-16- 8
Clark Oliver Houghton,	80	6-8	12	1- 0-6	1- 7- 2
Sargeant Joseph Joslin,	80	6-8	12	1- 0-6	1- 7- 2
Ditto Robert Legate,	80	6-8	11	0-18-9	1- 5- 5
Do John Colbourn,	80	6-8	6	0-10-3	1-16-11
Corporal Nathan Colbourn,	80	6-8	12	0-18-9	1- 5- 5
do Aaron Kendall,	80	6-8	9	0-14-0	1- 0- 8
Privates Thomas Page,	80	6-8	10	0-14-2	1- 0-10
Jotham Bennett,	80	6-8	12	0-17-0	1- 3- 8
Nathaniel Evens,	80	6-8	11	0-15-7	1- 2- 3
Abraham Goodnow,	80	6-8	12	0-17-0	1- 3- 8
Nathan Johnson,	80	6-8	12	0-17-0	1- 3- 8
Francis Parker,	80	6-8	12	0-17-0	1- 3- 8
Benjamin Smith,	80	6-8	11	0-15-7	1- 2- 3
Enoch Chase,	80	6-8	11	0-15-7	1- 2- 3
David Boutell,	80	6-8	11	0-15-7	1- 2- 3
Moses Osgood,	80	6-8	12	0-18-9	1- 5- 5
					25- 1- 2

Those that are below Inlisted into the Army.

	Days service.	
Ensign Timothy Routell,	7	17- 6
Serg't William Warner,	7	11-11
Corp'l Josiah Carter, Jun.	7	10-11
Corp'l Samuel Buss,	7	10-11
Drummer Luke Aldridge,	7	10-11
Fifer Abijah Haskell,	6	9- 4
Private Jonathan Kendall,	7	9-11
Levi Warner,	7	9-11
Zebedee Symonds,	7	9-11
Jonathan Colbourn,	7	9-11
Amos Brown,	7	9-11
Joshua Peirce,	10	14- 2
Stephen Chase,	7	9-11
John Stone,	7	9-11
Joshua Proute,	7	9-11
Joseph Smith,	6	8- 6
Nathaniel Chapman,	7	9-11
Benjamin Stearns,	7	9-11
Benjamin Gary,	7	9-11
Luke Johnson,	7	9-11
Joshua White,	7	9-11
James Wood,	7	9-11
		11-13- 0
		25- 1- 2
		36-14- 2

LEOMINSTER, December 15, 1775. I the subscriber Testifie and Say that this Roll Contains a True, Just, and Honest account of the time, Travel and Service of the men under my Command as is herein Sett forth according to my best Skill and Judgement.

JOHN JOSLIN, Capt.

WORCESTER ss. December 15, 1775. Capt. John Joslin made Oath to the truth of this Roll by him subscribed.

Before THOMAS LEGATE, Justice Peace.

IN COUNCIL, Feb'y 23d, 1776. Read & ord'd that a warr't be drawn on ye Treas'r for 36-14-2 in full of this roll.

PEREZ MORTON, D. Sec'y.

The following table contains the roll of Capt. Joshua Wood's company of militia men :

This Roll contains the travel and Service of Captain Joshua Wood and the militia men under his command, who in consequence of an alarm on the nineteenth day of April last marched from Leominster in the County of Worcester to Cambridge for the Defence of this Colony against the ministerial Troops.

	Miles travel.	For travel.	Days service.	Total for service.	Total amount.
Captain Joshua Wood,	80	6-8	9	1-18-7	£2-5-3
Lieut. Nathaniel Carter,	80	6-8	12	1-14-3	2-10-11
" Edward Phelps,	80	6-8	14	1-15-0	2-1-8
Sergeant Joseph Beaman,	80	6-8	16	1-7-4	1-14-0
" Samuel Stickney,	80	6-8	14	1-8-11	1-10-7
" Phillips Sweetser,	80	6-8	9	0-15-4	1-2-0
" Thomas Wilder,	80	6-8	12	1-0-6	1-7-2
Corp. Daniel Nichols,	80	6-8	9	0-14-0	1-0-8
" Elijah Fairbank,	80	6-8	9	0-14-0	1-0-8
" Ephraim Carter,	80	6-8	12	0-18-9	1-5-5
" Benjamin Perkins,	80	6-8	14	1-1-11	1-8-7
Drummer John Wood,	80	6-8	12	0-18-9	1-5-5
Private Elijah White,	80	6-8	12	0-17-0	1-3-8
John Jewet,	80	6-8	9	0-12-9	0-19-5
Jonas Gates,	80	6-8	9	0-12-9	0-19-5
William Boutell, Jr.	74	6-2	7	0-9-11	0-16-1
Luke Richardson,	74	6-2	7	0-9-11	0-16-1
Abiathar Houghton,	80	6-8	23	1-12-7	1-19-3
Samuel Hale, Jr.	80	6-8	16	1-2-8	1-9-4
Joseph Wilder, Jr.	80	6-8	14	0-19-10	1-6-6
John Bennet,	80	6-8	14	0-19-10	1-6-6
					29-8-7

The men on this side [below] listed into the Continental Army.

	Days service.	Total amount.
		£ s d
Josiah White,	8	0-11-4
James Boutell,	8	11-4
Ebenezer Osgood,	8	11-4
Benjamin Hale,	8	11-4
Caleb Cummins,	8	11-4
David Fleeman,	8	11-4
Isaac Whitmore,	8	11-4
John Bowers,	8	11-4
Abiathar Houghton, Jr.	8	11-4
Jesse Slack,	8	11-4
Charles Ames,	8	11-4
John Hale,	8	11-4
David Hale,	8	11-4
		7-7-4
		29-8-7
		£36-15-11

The subscriber hereby Certify and say that this roll contains a true and just account of the men, their travel and service herein mentioned, according to my Best Skill and Judgment.

JOSH. WOOD, Capt.

Leominster, Dec. 7, 1775.

WORCESTER ss. Decem. 7, 1775. Capt. Joshua Wood made oath to the truth of this roll agreeable to the declaration by him above subscribed.

Before THO. LEGATE, Just. peace.

Examined & compared with the original by

JONAS DIX,  
JOS. CUSHING, } Com'tee.

The roll of Capt. David Wilder's company is as follows:

A Role for Captain David Wilder's Company of Minute Men in Col'l John Whitcomb's Regiment who marched from their Respective homes on the Alarm the 19th of April, 1775.

The names under written all came from home the 19th of April, 1775.	Days in the service.	Places from whence they came.	Number of miles.	Pay for service.	Traveling expenses.	Sum total for service and traveling expenses.
				£ s D Q	£ s D Q	£ s D Q
David Wilder, Capt.	8	Leominster,	0	1-5-8-2	0-0-0-0	1-5-8-2
Joseph Bellows, Lieut.	12	Lunenburg,	45	1-14-3-1	7-6-0	2-1-9-1
Thomas Harkness, "	11	do	45	1-7-6-4	7-6-0	1-16-0-0
Elijah Gaffil, Sergt.	10	Fitchburg,	49	17-1-3	7-8-0	1-4-1-3
John Lock, Sergt.	9	Ashburnham,	0	15-5-0	0-0-0	0-15-5-0
Rufus Houghton, do.	8	Leominster,	47	13-5-0	7-10-0	1-1-6-2
Abijah Butler, do.	11	do	47	18-9-2	7-10-0	1-6-7-2
Noah Dodge,	4	Lunenburg,	45	5-8-2	7-6-0	0-13-4-2
Phinius Carter,	11	do	45	5-8-2	7-6-0	1-3-2-2
Israel Wiman,	4	do	45	5-8-2	7-6-0	0-13-4-2
Richard Fowler,	10	do	45	5-8-2	7-6-0	1-1-9-0
Jonathan Marling,	13	do	45	14-3-1	7-6-0	1-1-3-1
David Kindal,	5	Leominster,	47	7-1-3	7-10-0	0-14-11-3
Josiah Whetcomb,	12	"	47	18-6-3	7-10-0	1-4-11-3
James Joslin,	12	"	47	17-1-3	7-10-0	1-4-11-3
David Wilson,	12	"	47	17-1-3	7-10-0	1-4-11-3
William Nichols,	7	"	47	10-0-0	7-10-0	0-17-10-0
Ebenezer Stewart,	10	"	47	14-3-1	7-10-0	1-2-1-1
Ephraim Buss,	12	"	47	17-1-3	7-10-0	1-4-11-3
David Clarke,	7	"	0	10-0-0	0-0-0	0-10-0-0
Josiah Colburn,	7	"	0	10-0-0	0-0-0	0-10-0-0
Asa Kendal,	10	"	0	10-0-0	0-0-0	0-10-0-0
Richard Stewart,	10	"	47	14-3-1	7-10-0	1-2-1-1
Ruben Gates,	7	"	0	10-0-0	0-0-0	0-10-0-0

£25 4 0 1

COLONY MASSA. BAY, Decem. 27, 1775.

David Wilder made solemn Oath that this roll by him subscribed is just and true in all its parts. Before me, MOSES GILL, Jus. peace thro' ye province.

The Committee appointed to examine Muster Rolls have compared the within with the original and find it agrees therewith.

S. HOLTEN,  
EDWARD RAWSON, } Committee.  
SAMUEL MOODY,

IN COUNCIL, Feb'y 8, 1776. Read and allow'd and ord'd that a Warr't be Drawn on ye Treas'r for 25-4-0¼ in full of the within roll. PEREZ MORTON, Dp. Secr'y.

Soon after reaching Cambridge, the Leominster companies, in common with others, were disbanded, and a company was immediately enlisted, under Captain David Wilder, for eight months' service in the Continental army. The company consisted of forty-five men from Leominster, and twenty-three from Ashburnham, and was stationed at Prospect Hill, Cambridge.

In July, 1776, the people of Leominster passed a vote in favor of independence, and directed that a copy of the Declaration by Congress be placed upon the records of the town.

The following names of soldiers in the Continental Army, who served three years or during the war, for the town of Leominster, are copied from documents in the archives of the Commonwealth:

John Buss,	Samuel Houghton,	George Richardson,
Micah Nichols,	Luther Marble,	James Willard,
Nathaniel Evans,	Timothy Hastings,	Samuel Bennett,
Silas Carter,	Abel Wilder, sergeant,	Benjamin Wheelock,
Levi Blood,	Ephraim Johnson,	Samuel Woods,
David Heaman,	Josiah Whitcomb,	Isaac Eveleth,
Daniel Darling,	Samuel Woods,	William Eveleth,
Nicholas D—,	Job Priest,	Lazarus Bathrick,
James Battles,	James Smith,	Jacob Shelburn,
Joseph Hoar,	Elisha Davis,	David Whitcomb,
Benjamin Stuart,	Phinehas Rice,	Francis Whitcomb,
Joshua Pierce,	Asa Butterick,	William Taylor,
Thomas Ramons,	David Johnson,	William Boardman,
Nathaniel Brown,	Shubael Bailey,	John Fuller,
David Clark,	Caleb Wood,	John Wheelock.
Calvin Oaks,	David Joslin,	
Robert Motherhead,	Abner Livermore,	

The following named persons from Leominster served for the terms specified,—six months to one year. Many served under more than one enlistment, and there were numerous enlistments for shorter periods than those given.

ONE YEAR.	Shubael Bailey,	Silas Hale,
Nathan Colburn,	Calvin Oaks,	Joel Hale,
Thomas Follansbee,	Abner Livermore,	Silas Perry,
Robert Houghton,	David Clark,	Samuel Boutell,
Calvin Hale,	Robert Motherhead,	Benjamin Brown,
Joel Hale,	Samuel Houghton.	Levi Blood,
Jacob Simonds,	EIGHT MONTHS.	Benjamin Stearns,
Zephaniah Wood.	John Bowers,	Otis Lincoln,
NINE MONTHS.	Abiathar Houghton,	Joseph Stuart,
Thomas Page,	William Slack,	Samuel Barret,
Simon Perry,	Jesse Slack,	Joshua White,
Asa Buttrick,	Daniel Colburn.	Levi Phelps,
Joseph Stuart,	SIX MONTHS.	Jacob Simonds.
David Johnson,	Ephraim Johnson,	



In the summer of 1775 a demand was made on the towns of Massachusetts for thirteen thousand coats for the use of the patriot army, then engaged in the siege of Boston. The schedule of apportionment,—made in accordance with the last provincial tax,—required of the town of Leominster forty-three coats; of Lunenburg, fifty-seven; of Fitchburg, eighteen; of Westminster, thirty-seven; of Ashburnham, twelve; of Ashby, twelve; and other towns in proportion. The coats furnished were distributed to the army about November first, 1775,—one having been promised to each man serving for the term of eight months.

Throughout the war of the Revolution Leominster regularly filled her quota of men for the public service, and promptly complied with all the requisitions made by the state authority. In answering calls, for both men and means, the demands were often more than complied with,—so fully had her citizens committed themselves to the cause of liberty,—and at the close of the war a surplus of men remained to her credit after filling all her quotas under the various calls.

The people of the town were undoubtedly loyal and faithful subjects of the king before the Revolution, yet when it was found necessary to take up arms in defense of their rights as freemen they were equally loyal to the cause of independence. "During the whole period of the war," says Wilder, "no one in the town was accused, or even suspected, of being a tory or unfriendly to the cause." All of her people were loyal to the cause of freedom.

## CAPTAIN THOMAS COWDIN'S JOURNAL.

[MAY 25-JUNE 2, 1784.]

*Read at a meeting of the Society, June 19, 1893.*

BY CHARLES FOSDICK.

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[NOTE.—Thomas Cowdin, the author of the diary or personal journal here presented, was of Scotch ancestors, on both sides—the son of James Cowdin, the first of the name in America, who went from Scotland to Ireland about 1688, and who came to America about 1728, and settled in Holden, Mass., in 1731. Thomas was born in Ireland, December 25, 1720, being therefore eight years old when he came to this country. (Torrey in his History of Fitchburg says he was born in Stow, Mass., but this is an error, as Thomas Cowdin's family Bible proves—it being now in the possession of Hon. Nathaniel Cowdin of Batavia, N. Y.) He was apprenticed to the blacksmith's trade in Marlborough, Mass., and followed this business in Worcester, moving to Fitchburg in 1765, the next year after its incorporation. He purchased the "tavern" of Samuel Hunt (located near the house now occupied by S. S. Holton on Pearl street), and later owned quite a large tract of land in the town. He gave the site for the first meeting-house from what was called his "wheat field," near the corner of Blossom and Crescent streets.

He was a stirring man, and very prominent in public affairs. Torrey says of him: "He appears to have been

one of those persons who, without the advantages of birth, education, or fortune, unaided by the influence of patronage or favor, but relying solely upon the energies of a sound intellect and active mind, frequently elevate themselves above their neighbors." His military experience covers being pressed into the king's service to fight the Indians, service at the siege of Louisburg in 1745, and seven years' service in the war between England and France, from 1755, in which he attained the rank of captain.

He served with ability in various town offices, being chosen one of the board of selectmen immediately on his coming to town. From 1767 he was selectman, town clerk and town treasurer, continuously, till 1775.

Having loyally served his king in the French and Indian wars, he was slow to transfer his allegiance to the patriot cause at the opening of the Revolution, and was consequently looked upon by his fellow-townsmen with suspicion, and shorn of all his municipal honors. Before the close of the war, however, he was fully restored to public favor, being chosen in 1779 as delegate to the convention to form a state constitution, and also as the first representative from Fitchburg to the legislature upon the adoption of the constitution in 1780. He was re-elected to the same office in 1783 and 1784—the town not being represented during the intervening years.

He died in 1792, and a handsome polished shaft stands to his memory in Laurel Hill cemetery, erected by his descendant, Hon. John Cowdin of Boston. His daughter Hannah married Dr. Samuel Locke, a son of Rev. Samuel Locke, D. D., a former president of Harvard college. Capt. Cowdin was the father of a large family, and there are many of his descendants still residing in Fitchburg, though only one now of the Cowdin name—the venerable Natt Cowdin, now in his eightieth year, who is

his great-grandson.\* This journal has come into the possession of this society through the kindness and generosity of Miss Adelaide McIntire, a descendant of Captain Cowdin.]

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May the 25 1784 I Sot out from Fitchburg to attend the Grate & General Coart.

Wensday may { the Coart meet at ten o Clock and  
the 26 1784 { proseded to orgonise the hous of Rep-  
resentetives—then attended Divine Servis the the house  
ajurnd to 5 o Clock after noon.

AFTER NOON.

the House meet at 5 o clock and proseded to bisnes.  
then a motion was made to Chuse a Committe to waite  
upon the Revrant mr Hemenway and to Return the thanks  
of this House to him and Desier a Coppe for the press of  
the Election Sermon

then a Committe of both Houses ware Chosen to Ex-  
amin the Returns for a Governer and the Report of the  
Committe was that his Exelency John Hancock was Chose  
—the whole number of vots ware 8000 and sum od vots  
the number for mr Hancock ware 5160 votes and a large  
majorety for his Honer Thos Cushin

then the House ajurnd til tomoro 9 o Clock.

Thursday { then the House meet and proseded to Bis-  
May 27 { nes then a motion was made to have both  
1784 { Houses form into a Committe and proseed to  
the Choyse of a Senetor for the County of Suffolk & all  
other not chos accordingly mr John Lowell for the Coun-  
ty of Essex & the Honorable mr Dalton Chosen.

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\*Natt Cowdin died April 4, 1894.

for the County of Hampshier the Honorable mr Denison mr Strong and mr Bliss.

for the County of plimoth Chose mr Ore.

for the County of york Chose the Honorable mr Chadburn.

for the Counte Burkshier Chose the Honorable mr Woodbridge. then the two houss Seperated.

then the Secretrey Come with a mesege from the Governor informing the house that his Exelency was in the Sennet Chamber or was redey to take the oath requierd by the Constitution.

#### AFTER NOON.

then a mессedge Come from the Honorable Sennet that they ware Rede to Come to the Choyse of Couselers for the Insuing year and the folowing Gent ware Chosen.

The Honorable

Jeremiah Powell  
Walter Spuner  
Benj Chaburn  
James Prescott  
Moses Gill  
Nathaniel Cushin  
Jonathan Greenlief  
Samuel Holten  
Timothy Danielson

then their was a number of privat potitions then Come the Report of a Joynt Committe from the Honorable Sennett Respecting Lands lying nere hudsons River which Land is suposed to be of Grate value to this State. then a motion was made to send an Expres to Congress Respecting the matter.

then the House a jurnd til tomorow 9 O clock

frida may { then the house met a Cording to ther  
28 1784 { a jurnment and proseded to Bisnes and a

number of potitions ware presented. then a motion was made to tak up the order of the Day that is to Com to the Choise of a Chaplin & the Revrant mr Eckley is Chosen.

Treasurer Secetre and Comesery—and the folowing Gent men ware Chosen Secretery John Avrey is unanemosly Chosen Treasurer Thos Ivas Commesery Richard Devins is Chosen.

then Came on the Tryal of Jeremiah Larnard whether he should hold a seete in the General Coart or not—& after a Debate on the matter it was put off til 4 o Clock afternoon then their came a mesedge from the Sennett that those Gentelmen that ware Elected Counselers should be qualfyd to take their seets and a cording to the Constitution both Houses assembled in one Rume for that purpos and the Gentelmen ware qualifyd as the Constitution Requirers

AFTER NOON.

then a number of potitions ware presented which ware Committed—then the order of the Day was caled for which was to Recev the Returns of the Sevrall Returns of the Collectors of Excise for this Common welth it appeared that they all Excepted of that office then Came on the Report of a Committee to Report what publick bisnes was nesserey to be taken under Consideration the present Seson.

then Came on the Tryal of Jeremiah Larnard and after a Long Debate and the vote being Caled for it past that the said Jeremiah Larnad be suspended til he shall have his Tryal.

then Came on a number of potitions which ware and then the House ajurned till 9 o Clock to morow morning.  
Saturday { then Court meet acording to their  
may the 29 1784 { ajurment and proseded to bisnes.  
then came on a number of potitions which ware Committed.

then Came on a potition from the Town of Watertown praying for an allowance out of the treasury to Enable them to Buuld the bridge over watertown River So wide as Carriges may pass with Saftey which was Committed

then Came a potition from the Town of Kittrey praying for the abatment of a fine for not Sending a Representative which was Committed

then Come on the Report of the Committe to Consult the printer to now what the Journals of the house could be printed for and to Report whether is best to be Dun & the Report of the Committe is they thnk it for the Benefit of the people at Large

then Come on a potition of John Emery of Boston an absentee praying for leve to Return and after a Debate on the potition the potition was to ly on the Table

then the House ajurnd til monday 10 o Clock

Saboth Day {  
may 30 1784 }

Monday { ten o Clock the Coart met and proceded  
May the 31 { to bisnes—and a number of potitions ware  
1784 { presented which ware Committed. then a  
motion was made to See if the House would Exept of  
the Report of their Committe on the publick bisnes.

then came a mesedg from the Hon<sup>r</sup> Senett that the Hon<sup>bl</sup> Jeremiah Powel was Rede to take the oaths Required by the Constitution to qualefy him for a Counselor

then a motion was made that aney Gentelmen that hath aney papers belongin to the General Coart and having leve to Return home or leve of absence that they Discharge themselves of the papers

then the House ajurnd til 3 o Clock after noon.

#### AFTER NOON

then Came a number of Gentelmen which ware Returnd to Serve in the General Coart then a number of

laws that ware Reseved the Last General Coart and for want of time ware orderd to ly til the General Coart shall be Convend.

then their Came a potition from an old penshner wounded the last ware under the King which was Was orderd to be withdran. then Came a number of potitions which were committed then their Came a Complaint a gainst one Ebenezer Craft of the County of Worcester for Breach of Trust in his office as Debety Sherrieff. then the House a jurnd til 9 o Clock tomorow morning.

Tuesday { the Coart meet at 9 oclock. then  
June the 1 1784 { came a number of potitions which was committed. then came a potition from Paul moore praying that John Chamberlin of Worcester be impowered to Give a Deed of a Sertin tract of land to the s<sup>d</sup> Paul moore then Came a Bill for Establisg the value of Silver and Gold to gether with a number of other Bills.

then their came a messeg from the Hon<sup>bl</sup> Sennet for the house to Joyn the Senitt in preparing an answer to his Exelencys Mesedge on the 27 of May last a cordingly a Committe was chose

then came a potition from Watertown for a lotery for the purpos of Rebulding the Bridg over Charls River

then the House a jurnd til 3 o clock afternoon

#### AFTERNOON

then meet at 3 o clock a number of potitions ware Committed and a number of Bills ware red to be Ingrost then came an Information from the Committe on the publick a Counts that mr William Jackson had waited upon the s<sup>d</sup> Committe Desiring the s<sup>d</sup> Committe to Deliver up said house to the said Jackson.

then a motion was made to have the publick bisnes taken up acordingly the Honarabl mr osgood laid his accounts on the Table for his servis at Congress & after a



Debate on the matter the house past a vote to have the accounts Reed

the account	375 : 13—4
Recevd of the	90— 2—8
Treasurer	£465—15—0

alowd to the Hon Samuel osgod 20/ pd

tyd and turnd by the Spker

then a potition from two frensh oficers for money to Enable them to Return to their native Cuntry which was Committed

then Came on onse more a potition from Tho<sup>s</sup> Brattle praying for Liberty to Reside in his own native Cuntrey and after a Debate upon the matter the House Came into the folowing Resolve or vote past the vote being put the house consisted of 107 in favor of the vote

38 against—69.

then a motion was made to have the potition ly on the table—and a jurnd til 9 o Clock tomoro morning.

Wensday { the house meet at the Court house  
June the 2 1784 { at 9 o clock — and pceded to bisnes  
then a Report Come from the Hon Senet respecting the Governers mesedge and a Committe chose to prepare an answer then a number of Gentelmen Come into the House that ware not qualifyd then came on the Report of a Committe Stating the pay of the Sevrall officers of the Treasurer and others for the year Insuing then came a potition from Nathaniel Genison praying for a new tryeal and after a Debate the question being put the house the Report Re committed then came a potitition a Ganst a member that was not legul and pray for a nother Choyse.

then the House a jurnd til 3 oclock afternoon

#### AFTER NOON

then Came on a Debate upon the taking a valution and after a Debate upon the matter and after the Debate was over the house past the folowing vote

then Came a potition from Holiston seting forth their their meeting for the Choyse of a Representative was not legal which was Committed

Thursday { the hous met at 9 o clock and proseded  
June 3 1784 } to Bisnes—and a number of potitions were laid on the Spekers Table which ware Committed—then a motion was made to apoint a Committe as managers of the lotery for widning watertown bridge

then a motion was to tak up the order of the Day which was that of Deviding the County of Sufolk

then Com on a potition the Town of Manesfield praying for a new Choyse of a Represenative—and the prayer was so far Granted as to Exclude Capt John Pratt from having a seet in the house til the matter can be further inquierd into

then a number of Bills ware Red to be Ingrost and times asind for a third Reding

one a gainst hakers & pedlers & Pette Chapmen & the fine lowered from £20— to £4— then a motion was made for a pointing and athorising a Committe to Setle the Boundrey betwene this Goverment and that of new york and the Bill for that purpos having 3 Sevril Reding it past to be ingrost

then a potition was Red from a poor woman whose husband was lost at see—that had her whole Lands Sold for taxes 300 acres for a trifel and she and her 5 Children Redust to poverty by the sale of s<sup>d</sup> Land . and after the House had heard the Debates of the House—the House thot proper to have the potition Committed

then the House a Jurnd til 3 o clock after noon

#### AFTERNOON

then came on the potitions of the Sevrall Towns in the County of Worcester on a Count of the Convention which ware committed

then Came on a Despute about the Election of a member from Holis and after a Debate upon the matter the house came to this vote that is the potition be Re Committed and to Report what is best to be Dun

the Coart a jurnd til 9 o clock tomorow  
 fryda may { then came on a number of potitions which  
 the 4 1784 } ware Committed.

then came on a potition praying that the Dutey might be taken off of a quantety of tobago

then Came on the potition from Holiston a bout their Representative Should take his or not & after a long Debate the house Came to a vote and that was that the potitiners have leve to with Draw their potition

then came on the potition of Nat. Gineson and after a long Debate the House past the folowing vote that is that Jeneson have a nother hering

then the House a jurnd til 3 o Clock afternoon.

#### AFTERNOON

then came on a number of potitions Sum with reports upon them—& a number of bills to be ingrost

then Came on a long Debate upon the mode of Taxation Sum propose one way the best others propose a nother moade to be best. then a motion was made to pospond the matter til to morow morning & then a motion was made to a jurn til 9 o Clock tomorow.

Saturday { then the Coart meet acording to their  
 June the 5 } a jurment and proseded to the Besnes of  
 1784 { the Day then came on a Bill for Regulating the Choyse of Jureys for Tryals as the Constetution Directs then came a potition from Newton Seting forth the Choyse of mr Parker of that Town as a Representative and the potition was committed.

then came the Report of a Committe on the potition of Will<sup>m</sup> Castang and william assendaw 2 french ofiers that have servd in the army 7 years then a motion was

made to have a Committe Chose to Return the thank of this House to the s<sup>d</sup> William Castang & William asendaw which was Committed.

then Came on the mode of taxation which was a Gain Committed then came on a motion to apoint to have a fosison apointed to take Care of the States poor in the alms house and after a Short Debate upon the matter a Committe was Chose to Report to the House a number of other potitions from all parts of this State

Saboth Day { then the house a Jurnd til monday  
June 6 1784. { ten O Clock.

Monday { the Coart meet a cording to their a jur-  
June 7 { ment and proseded to bisnes then a number  
1784 { of potitions were laid on the Table & Committed in order for a Report. then Came the Secretery with a letter from mr morris which was Committed.

then Came a potition from a Gentelman that had purch a tract of land and s<sup>d</sup> land had bin sold for taxes pray for a further time to pay s<sup>d</sup> tax

#### AFTERNOON.

then Came a potition from Paxtown from Capt Witt a bout Doctor Stearns praying for liberty to withdraw his bond and Stearns be procecutd then Came a number of potitions from Difrent parts of this State. then Came a potition from the Town of Werstorn and after a Debate the potition was committed. then Came a potition from one mores praying that a Judgment Recovrd a gainst Edward Raymond may be sot a side and a new Tryal be had there on and after a Debat the matter was orderd to ly on the Table. then the House a Jurnd til tomorow 9 o Clock in order for the Committes to set.

Tuesday { the Coart met at 9 o clock and proseded  
June the 8 { to Bisnes . then came a potition from Sut-  
1784 { ton praying Redress of burdens the Town labord under brot by Decon William Hull.

then Came a potition from Decon oliver Wit of paxton praying that Docter Stearns his Son in law now in Worces-ter Goal may be by the s<sup>d</sup> Decon Witt & his bond be Dis- charged then was Red an Estemet of the Expences for the year 1784.

the Governors Salery	1100
the General Coart	9500
Harvard Colledge	1000
the Treasurers office & Clarks	2000
members of Congress	2000
Supreme Coart	1500
Secreteys office	900
Molishe Roals	3000
the States poor and publick buildings is	10000
Consolidated notes payabel in 1784	90000
the Intrest on nots payabel 1785	90000
Warrants alredy Drawn on the treasure	21000
a tax laid on poles & Estates of	

then a motion was made for to a jurn and the house did a jurn til 3 o clock

#### AFTERNOON

then Came on a number of potitions which ware Com- mitted—and one upon the Report of the Committee and oversears of the almshouse and after a long Debate the House came to proceded to have the oversears of the poor tak the care and Employ a phosition

then Came on the order of the Day and a law was Red Establishing a law for an Impost of 5 percent this act to be in force the 15 Day of June 1784

then the House a jurnd til tomorow 9 o clock

Wensday { then the Coart opened and proseded to  
 June the 9 { bisness then I obtaind leve of absns  
 1784 { then Came a number of potitions which  
 ware Comitted and ordered to Report then the order of  
 the Day was Cald for which was the Impost bill.

## "THE ALBUM: OR PANACEA FOR ENNUI."

*Read at a meeting of the Society, Nov. 20, 1893.*

BY ATHERTON P. MASON, M. D.

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The first and only magazine, of a strictly literary character, published in Fitchburg was *The Album: or Panacea for Ennui*. It was issued in 1831, and had but a brief existence, from March to November, inclusive. It is not the purpose of this paper to give the history of the magazine, or of its founders, publishers and contributors, but simply a brief résumé of its contents.

Our society possesses but one number of the magazine, (No. 8, for October, 1831,) donated by Miss Louisa W. Caldwell of Dorchester; but the Fitchburg Public Library has a complete set, bound, without much doubt the only one now in existence, and it is from this that the following is drawn. Probably there are stray numbers of the magazine still undestroyed, and it would be a great acquisition if these could be found and secured for the society's collection; but we can hardly hope to get a complete set at this late day.

The magazine seems to have started with the idea of including the contents under three principal heads or departments, viz.: Original Tales, Selections, and Poetry; but in the last numbers this method was somewhat modified, and there was a nearer approach to the arrangement, or perhaps more correctly, lack of arrangement, in the magazines of to-day.

The first number (March 20, 1831,) opens with "The Mutiny," an unsigned original tale. It is a short story of the sea. A young man, William Monson, is about to make his first voyage as captain of an English barque. His destination is India and he will be absent a year. He takes affectionate leave of his betrothed, Ellen Temple, and starts on his long voyage. When homeward bound the crew mutinies and the young captain is put into a boat and turned adrift. A squall comes soon which sends the barque to the bottom with all on board; but the young man in the boat weathers it, and is picked up by a merchantman bound for India. Several years elapse before he can return to England, and all this time he is mourned as dead by the faithful Ellen, who, the story says, in spite of many splendid offers, still remained the betrothed of William Monson. Finally he returns. She hears his well-remembered voice calling her by name, feels the blood in every vein rushing to her heart, and sinks into his arms. Here the story ends. Presumably they lived happily ever afterwards. It is simply the old-fashioned story of trials and tribulations turning out all right in the end, and there is little literary merit in it. Following this is a long and rather sensational selection from *The Lady's Book*, entitled "Scotland's Fairest and Bravest," by Miss Ingram. A second selection from *The Token* comes next, entitled "The Twins," in which is related an interesting case of the imprisonment and pardon of a Tory during the Revolution. Following this are two short articles, apparently editorial, concerning "Females in Society" and "Books." Under Poetry are two poems, one original, entitled "Song," by Graham; the other is the "Hymn of the Moravian Nuns at the Consecration of Pulaski's Banner," and has no author's name affixed.\* The foregoing fill sixteen closely-

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\*Henry W. Longfellow was the author.

printed pages. On the whole we cannot consider this first number to have been a very startling success from a literary point of view. Succeeding numbers showed considerable improvement, and there is no doubt that the magazine was a credit to the town and its proprietors.

The April number begins with a well-written and very readable original tale by Z., entitled "The Hunters," relating the history of a tragedy among the Green mountains. A second article under this heading is "Reminiscences," by Vaughan, who was evidently a Fitchburg boy who had seen hard times. After many years he returns to his native village, but no friend greets him; he finds strangers living in the cot where he was born, but (he says) "the rocky hill which overlooked the village was alone unchanged. I wandered to its top and there I sat me down and wept like a child, as I was wont." It would be interesting to know who this Vaughan was. The selections in this number comprise two stories—"A Fortune Hunter" and "The Arabian Steed." Then come two pages, probably editorial, on various subjects. One is the "Character of a Dashing Girl" from which it is evident that such a girl was not approved of in those days. Under Poetry we find "Baron De Kalb," by Uncas, and "A Domestic Scene," by Mrs. Hemans. At the end of this number is the following "Notice to Correspondents:"

"POCONTOCK will appear in the next No. W. has also been received and will also appear. ALANSON writes to much under the influence of the 'blues' to assist in dispelling Ennui."

The May number opens with the first of what was to be a series of articles under the caption, "Tales of a Grandfather." In a brief preface it is stated that "the following is the first of a series of anecdotes related to us by an aged individual who served his country in the French war, about the year 1760; also through the Rev-



olution which gave birth to the United States. This gentleman is now residing in this vicinity." The tale which follows is entitled "The Capture," and deals with the troubles at the time of the French and Indian war. Next comes "Pocomtuck," by MacIrvin. This is a very readable legend of the Deerfield valley, concerning the historic Indian chief Pocomtuck, previous to, and at the time of, the destruction of Deerfield in February, 1704. The selection in this number is a story of Venice—"Bianca Di Gonzaga"—and the poetry includes "He Never Smiled Again," by Mrs. Hemans, and "The Cossack to His Horse." This concludes the number, with the exception of a note to this effect:

"Several articles are on hand, intended for publication this week, but were unavoidably omitted. Also several of poetry, some of which were evidently written under the frowns of the 'sacred nine;' among the latter was an article upon May day, which was unfortunately mistaken for the ebullitions of some of the canine race and shown to one as such; but imagine our astonishment when the creature set up the most dismal howl 'that ever pierced the dull ear of night' and took himself off with an air of such malignant and stern resentment that we expected to have been attacked ere this by the whole species."

The June number begins with No. 2 of the "Tales of a Grandfather." The scene is laid in New Jersey, in Revolutionary times, and relates the experiences of a company of soldiers sent to intercept a party of British foragers who were conveying provisions to Sir Henry Clinton's army in New York. There are also two more short original tales, "The Contrast," by Orasmus, and "Reflections After a Shower," by Irville. Under Selections is a long and very good story entitled "Miss Patty's Caution," and signed "Nella." The poetry comprises "To A—," by Oscar, "The Worst," by W. H. V., and "To the Boston Band," (unsigned).

In the July number, No. 3 of the "Tales of a Grandfather" gives the history of a young lieutenant in the

American army. Next comes an extract entitled "The Pirate," to which attention of readers is thus called:

"We hope the attention of our readers will be particularly attracted to the following article from the New York Mirror; it is an excellent illustration of the abusive and, we are sorry to say, too prevalent practice of listening to and circulating dark surmises and sly hints and innuendoes against reputation and character. Too much, for the well-being and peace of society, does the habit and practice prevail of *guessing* and then repeating the unknown result of those guesses as truth and matter of fact. Did those who indulge in the practice know how contemptible it renders them in the eyes of others, they would break the habit and rend off the chain though it bound them like the cords of life."

These observations by the editor of the Album are eminently sensible, and are as applicable today as when they were printed. In "The Pirate" a young man of good character follows the sea. He saves his earnings and returns to his native village from time to time. It is rumored that he has more money than can be honestly accounted for. He marries an excellent young lady, establishes her in a pleasant home and goes to sea again. He is absent three years. On his return a jealous enemy starts the old rumor afloat, and it grows to the absolute statement that the young man has been a pirate. The gossip of the villagers is narrated. The termination of the affair is that the young man publicly horsewhips the person who started the rumor, and the next year is sent to the legislature by the admiring villagers. An original tale by Alpha, entitled "The Ride," follows. Only one article, entitled "Flowers," appears under the head of Selections. There are four poems in this number—"Mendowit," by Uncas, "Lines written while standing on the shores of Uncheewalem," by Auvin, "The Soldier's Funeral," by Miss Landon, and "Switzerland is Still My Home," (unsigned). At the end of this number it is announced that the "Tales of a Grandfather" will be

omitted in the August number. This turned out to be true, not only of the August number, but of the succeeding months as well.

In the August number are two original tales—the first, "Caroline Rothby," by Escu, relates the downward course of a fashionable and giddy young woman, and the second is the "Legend of Gibbet Hill" (unsigned), a rather sensational affair. Next comes "The Village Garri-son," a selection from "Anecdotes of the Thirty Years' War." Then an incident that occurred during King Philip's war is related, and a short sketch—"A Fisher's Cottage"—follows. Under Poetry we find "The Phantom Ship," by P. T. O., "The Young Cavalier" (unsigned), "Days of Boyhood," by Alberto," and "Bess and Her Spinnin Wheel," by Robert Burns. At the end of this number is the following:

"PREMIUMS."

"The publisher of the Album: or Panacea for Ennui, encouraged by the patronage which has been afforded to the work, has determined to enlarge the work, making twenty-four pages in a number, instead of sixteen. The publisher also, in the hope of exciting correspondents to renewed exertions in his behalf, offers the following premium for the best Moral Tale; viz. A set of Byron's Works in 8 volumes, 18mo, elegantly bound and gilt. For the second best, a volume of the Gazette and Album, for the third a volume of the Album. Each Tale to occupy at least 8 pages of the Album. A committee chosen for the purpose will determine the merits of the articles and the decision will be made known in the October number of the Album. Previous to which, Tales intended for the prize must of course be forwarded to the publisher."

The September number has the promised twenty-four pages. The department, "Original Tales," is retained, but those of "Selections" and "Poetry" are dropped, the poems being interspersed between prose articles. Of the two original tales the first is "The Homicide," by Ariel, relating the story of a crime, the discovery of the murderer and his execution. The second is "Small Talk,"

contributed by L., and is in the form of a dialogue between two young men, in which one of them tells, in a rather amusing manner, the tattle and gossip he heard while making a call on a certain Dame Roberts and her five fair daughters. The rest of this number is taken up by a poem, "The Choice," by Roscoe, a sketch of the "Troubadours," by Auvin, a story from "Sketches of Irish Character," an extract from the *Ariel* relating the downfall of a respectable young man who drew a lottery prize of \$10,000, and ere long ruined himself and his family by gambling; an extract from *Blackwood's Magazine*, some "Stanzas" by Byron, a short article on the "Education of Women," and finally an unsigned poem on "Poland."

The October number opens with a story by G., entitled "A Tale of the Ocean," relating experiences on board a pirate vessel. Next Rolla contributes "A Dream," a poem of considerable length and merit. Following this is a short article, very likely editorial, which shows the feeling then prevalent with regard to women's capability and fitness to enter professional life and to assume the duties hitherto performed by men alone. It is as follows:

"WOMEN. Although their province seems to be by the domestic hearth, to be the cheerful and contented companions of man in health, and to hover, like a guardian angel, over the couch of sickness: yet the brighter and bolder virtues do not sit ill upon them, if they do not destroy that exquisite charm, which retiring delicacy alone can lend. But divest them of that charm of feminality and place them in the orator's desk, in the pulpit, or at the bar, and though by their talents they may gain our respect, they never can our affection."

Following this is a short story, "Jack Waters." Then comes the history of another good man gone wrong through drink, and his ultimate reformation, contributed by G. A long and rather remarkable and interesting article follows, called "The Book of Life," taken from

*The Club Book*, whatever that was. It deals with annually recurring apparitions, and is really quite thrilling. Two or three poems conclude this number. No mention is made of the promised announcement of the fortunate prize winners in the Moral Tale contest, but on the last page are these "Items of Gratuitous Advice," which it is perhaps worth while to copy.

"We would advise ladies under thirty to look in a book as often as in a glass. Ladies who are more ancient may be more benefitted by an occasional contemplation of their retiring graces.

"We would advise young men to keep silence while their seigniors are conversing, as they may learn wisdom. We would recommend to old men, never to tell to their children of their youthful frolics and follies, unless they prefer having them learn folly to learning wisdom.

"We would advise those who go to church to think of the sermon rather than talk of the hearers. And those who do not go, to employ themselves in serious meditation or useful reading, rather than in sleeping and eating.

"We would advise all those who are rich to be benevolent, and all who are poor to be content.

"And, lastly, we would suggest to those who pretend to give advice, the propriety of practising what they dictate to others."

The November (and last) number of the *Album* omits the heading "Original Tales." The first article in this number is "A Leaf from the Diary of a Tourist," by Iago, relating a little experience in an English inn. Next comes a very pretty and musical poem entitled "To My Child" (unsigned). A short article by A. R. deals with the art of letter-writing, and endeavors to substantiate the theory that persons who converse well are apt to be poor letter-writers and *vice versa*. The following specimen of a college student's letter is put in as evidence:

"*Dear Mother*:—I take my pen to inform you that I am well and hope this will find you so *to*. I do not know what to write now I have begun. I find it very hard work to write a letter, and therefore I guess I'll leave off.                      Your most affectionate son,                      J. M."

Next comes the following Epigram by J. E.:

"Says Will to Sam, 'My boots are new,  
And how think you I got 'em?'  
'I cannot tell, I'm sure, can you?  
Unless you gave your name.'  
'That would not do, my name is known  
At every tradesman's shop in town.  
So to get clear of any bother,  
Kept my name, gave snob another.'"

Following this we find a feature new to the magazine. It is "Literary Notices" to this effect:

"'The Bravo' by Cooper, a rather original affair, possessing much interest. The scene is laid in Venice, and the object to satirize the Senate of the states is fully accomplished.

"'Count Robert of Paris' and 'Castle Dangerous' have been issued by the Harpers. They are said to be the last of Scott.

"'Eugene Aram.'—In press of the Harpers—said to be superior to any of its predecessors.

"Poems.—Many small volumes in press. Bryant's the most distinguished. In many of his poems he combines striking energy of thought with a remarkably smooth expression.

A rather startling story by H., entitled "Suicide," follows. Next comes an unsigned story, "Woman's Constancy," in which is well depicted the constancy of a rich and beautiful young lady to her lover, who had the misfortune to be poor. Her relatives endeavored to break the match, and caused him to be sent away on a long sea voyage, in the hope that she would forget him and form a more suitable alliance; but she does not waver. At last he returns, her friends give in, and the young couple are married. The last prose article in this number is entitled "Maria: a Sketch from Life." It is unsigned, and tells the story of an innocent girl, beguiled by the flattery and machinations of a so-called society gentleman, who was a villainous scoundrel and soon deserted her. The magazine ends with two poems: the first unsigned, and entitled

"To the Moon;" the second is by T. H. B., and has the title "He Came at Morn." As it constitutes the ending of the *Album* and is very neatly expressed, perhaps there can be no better termination to this paper than the quotation of the poem in full.

"HE CAME AT MORN."

"He came at morn to a lady's bower,  
He sang and play'd till the noontide hour,  
He sang of war—he sang of love,  
Of battle plain, of peaceful grove;  
The lady could have stayed all day  
To hear the gentle minstrel play!  
And when she saw the minstrel go  
The lady's tears began to flow.

"At mid-day with her page she went  
To grace a splendid tournament;  
And there she saw an arméd knight  
With golden hem and plumage white;  
With grace he rode his sable steed,  
And, after many a martial deed,  
He knelt to her with words most sweet  
And laid his trophies at her feet.

"At night, in robes both rich and rare,  
With jewels sparkling in her hair,  
She sought the dance, and smiling came  
A youthful prince and breathed her name.  
He sang—it was the minstrel strain!  
He knelt—she saw the knight again!  
With lovers three—how blest to find  
The charms of all in one combined."

## PIONEER PRINTERS OF FITCHBURG.

*Read at a meeting of the Society, November 20, 1893.*

BY J. F. D. GARFIELD.

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The first printing-office in Fitchburg was opened in the autumn of 1830, by Jonathan E. Whitcomb and John Page. Whitcomb was a son of Mr. John Whitcomb, at that time a well-to-do farmer in the south part of the town. Young Whitcomb, who had served some time at his trade in Greenfield, had left there and started an office in Boston; but, finding that field pretty thoroughly occupied, he soon abandoned it to come to Fitchburg, where in company with Page he issued the first number of the *Fitchburg Gazette*, on the nineteenth of October, 1830. John Page was a son of Enoch C. Page, a farmer of Lunenburg. He had learned what he knew of printing in the office of Col. Edmund Cushing, of that town. At the time of his coming to Fitchburg he was but twenty years of age; while the senior partner, Whitcomb, was twenty-one.

The first number of the *Gazette* was issued to one hundred and twenty-five subscribers; the paper therefor having been made at the mill of Alvah Crocker in West Fitchburg. Whitcomb was the literary head of the firm, and the "managing editor" of the *Gazette*. Having a ready command of language and a fertile imagination, it was his custom to stand at the case without copy, and put his editorials in type as ideas came to him at the time. The initial number opens with a column editorial, announcing



a neutral position in politics, and devotion to the "interests of the agriculturalist and manufacturer as well as the scholar and philosopher."

"Original productions will be sought for with solicitude, and native genius rewarded, so far as depends upon us, with merited honors. To give interest and variety to a publication of this description will require a combination of talents, and considerable editorial labor; the latter of which, we hope, will be greatly lessened by the exertions of correspondents. Many have already pledged themselves to devote an occasional hour to the exercise of the pen, in our behalf, and we hope many more will enlist in the good cause."

An article in the same issue on the state of affairs in Europe concludes with the following words:

"We hail the present glorious era in the annals of nations as the herald of a brighter day, when thrones shall be but names, and tyrants unheard of but in the pages of history; when Liberty shall extend her benign influence over the eastern as well as the western hemisphere, and foster all in her arms, 'from the sons of Afric's burning climes to the pigmy race of an ice-bound shore;'

'When no slave shall tremble at a despot's nod,  
And no knee bow but in homage to a God.'"

Comparatively little attention was paid in those early days, by country papers, to the collection of local news; but the following item from the *Gazette* of August 9, 1831, shows that, even then, the "local editor" was budding into promise as an enterprising and inventive genius.

"SEA SERPENT ON LAND.—A snake of the first quality and largest size, we are informed, has made its appearance not far from this village. This same 'sarpent,' or one of about the same dimensions, was seen near the same place some half-dozen years since, and caused considerable excitement. We had the peculiar pleasure of looking the tempter in the eye on his first visit in these precincts; and we were not inclined to take another look at the time. As near as we could judge, he was then about fourteen feet in length, and about six inches through the body in the largest part. How much he has grown within the last six years we are unable to state. The creature is, undoubtedly, very nearly related to

the great serpent seen 'down east.' It differs very much, however, from the 'sea-serpent' in one particular, which is in possessing a very quiet and harmless disposition."

At the time the *Gazette* was started the town of Fitchburg contained not far from two thousand inhabitants. It was largely a farming community—although there were several small mills engaged in the manufacture of cotton and woolen goods. The first number of the *Gazette* contains a notice of "Twenty Girls Wanted," to work in a cotton mill, by I. & C. Jewett. It has also the warrant for a town meeting, notice of a sheriff's sale, and the announcements of the tailor and the hatter; but there was little business in the town to support a printing office, and the *Gazette* fell far short of paying its running expenses.

Notwithstanding this discouraging financial outlook, in less than six months from the issue of the first number of the paper, a new enterprise was launched upon the uncertain sea of public favor, consisting of a monthly literary magazine, entitled *The Album; or Panacea for Ennui*, the initial number appearing in March, 1831. The first number bore the imprint of J. E. Whitcomb & Co., as publishers. In the prospectus they prudently say, "In offering the first number of the *Album* to the public we shall make no promises that we cannot fulfil. All we promise is to conduct it as near as we can to please ourselves." Commendable precaution! Immediately after the first issue of the *Album* the firm of J. E. Whitcomb & Co. was dissolved. For a time the name of J. Page appeared as publisher of both the *Gazette* and *Album*; but if the former had failed to pay expenses it is certain that the latter did not succeed in filling the depleted treasury. After two or three months the name of Page disappears, and that of J. E. Whitcomb takes its place. It is probable

that Page left Fitchburg about this time, as his name does not appear further in connection with the business.

The next we hear of him he is carrying on the printing business in Boston, as appears by an imprint on the title page of an edition of *Trumbull's Indian Wars*,—"Boston: J. Page, printer, 1832." The same year we find him down at Norwich, Conn., starting a new paper called the *Independent Republican*. How long he remained there is uncertain, but probably not long; for he was like the proverbially rolling stone that gathers no moss. He finally drifted to New York city, where for a time we lose sight of him entirely,—and might have known nothing of his subsequent career, but for a communication which appeared in the *Sentinel*, written by Rev. William S. Wilder, some years after Mr. Page's death. Mr. Wilder was a resident of Fitchburg most of the time from 1830 to 1840, and was for a time connected with the newspaper business here. After leaving Fitchburg he went to New York, where he became connected with the Baxter-Street (Five Points) Mission. In the course of his ministrations there he met the widow of John Page, and learned from her some particulars of Page's history, which he communicates to the *Sentinel* of August 30, 1860. The following is an extract:

\* \* \* "A gentle rap was heard at the door, and in came a poor woman, past the middle age of life. A single glance at her condition was enough to satisfy us of the object of her call. 'God help the poor,' thought we, as she stood before us, her head bare, hair uncombed, a piece of an old shawl thrown over her shoulders, without much order of arrangement; a faded, filthy skirt hanging in tatters from her waist, so torn into strips that the use of crinoline would have been a breach of good taste, if not damaging to the fashion; the feet and ankles void of covering, except that which so democratically adheres to rich and poor alike, on a wet muddy day from our street crossings, and about the only thing in which there is affinity between the two classes in this christian city; for the pure air of heaven, the free use of water,

the light of the sun, and the blessed gospel, blesses not all of the poor here. This woman's appearance bespoke poverty, intemperance, wretchedness and want. Still there seemed in her, beneath this, a dignity of bearing in her personal form and demeanor, with a frank, open countenance and a reservedness in her address, that spoke of better days. By her side and firmly grasping her hand, was a little boy of five years. The boy appeared to be quite uneasy, as if impatient. 'Be quiet, Johnny, be quiet,' said the woman, in an authoritative but kind voice and accent, which discovered her to be a descendant from the Emerald Isle. 'Can you, dear sir, help us to a little food? We are hungry, sir; we have had nothing to-day, and it's but little we had yesterday, and it's that for what the boy's crying for, sir.' Believing, as we most firmly do, in the doctrine that there are times when there can be more gospel conveyed to the soul of man in a loaf of bread, than in a pile of sermons, we chose in this case the use of the bread. Then we asked for her personal history, according to our custom when applied to for relief. This we obtained at different times, but will let her speak for herself as nearly as possible.

"I was born in Ireland, was married in early life to one of my own country. He was a carpenter by trade. The times were hard with us, sir, and my husband thought we had best try our fortunes in America, so we took passage to New York. He soon found work at his trade, and we had a house, and a good home it was for us and our little ones, while he lived, but the cholera came, sir, and of a night it took him, and he died. O, sir, that was a sad day for us. He was buried from the hospital. After he was gone I took care of the children, and got along pretty well by taking in washing. Among those who let me have their work to do was a printer. He used to come regularly after his linen, and sometimes he would sit down and talk with me, for an hour. He sometimes seemed cast down and discouraged, and I tried to cheer him up. Both of us, somehow, were quite lonesome at times, and both of us felt rather friendless, sir, and, one evening, when he came and had a long talk about how lonesome it was to live so lonely, before he left, said he, 'Why can't we be married, and not live any longer so lonely?' and I told him I'd been thinking the same myself, and so we were married, sir. It was the year of the celebration of the Croton Water Works. He used to work in Adams' printing office. He came to New York from Fitchburg, where he had a printing office and published a paper. His father, Mr. Enoch C. Page, lived in Lunenburg, near by his office. His brothers, Mr. Enoch Page and Mr. George Page, both did live in the neighborhood, but I have not heard of them since my husband died three years ago.—

I sent them word, but they never answered it. I suppose they did not like our marriage. My husband once took me to Fitchburg, to visit them.'

"At this stage of her narrative we had unconsciously become rather nervously excited. The mentioning of certain names, and places, recalled most impressively to the mind a cloud of familiar circumstances, long forgotten, or something like an half-remembered, but deeply interesting dream; and we began, at once, a system of questioning and cross questioning we suppose something like a lawyer, for she, like some witnesses we have seen, became exceedingly evasive in her answers. We were about telling her that we believed her to be a base impostor, and to prepare her mind to receive this declaration with some effect, we told her we knew something of the persons and places she had mentioned. At this announcement the poor woman burst into a flood of tears, buried her face in her hands and started for the door. We recalled her, took her by the arm and conducted her to her seat. When she became a little more calm, she attempted to speak, but her utterance was checked with tears and sobs, and the little boy began to cry too, saying 'Mother, oh, mother let us go—let us go, mother!' 'Hush, Johnny, be quiet, be quiet, wait a little,' said the woman. 'God help the poor'—thought we, as we felt for a handkerchief to brush the dust or a fly or something from our cheek—'God help the poor.' Recovering herself she said—'Had I known, sir, that you knew any of my husband's relatives, I would *never* have come here to see you. It's long since I have seen anybody that knew them, and I never meant they should know what had become of me, if they took pains to enquire. It's a poor wretch they would find me should they see me as I am now. It was not so once. Mr. Page drank badly at one time before he died, and I shamed him out of it. I despised the use of whiskey and yet here I am, a poor ——,' and again she fell to weeping. At a subsequent interview we obtained from her the following additional particulars.

"My first husband was a good husband to me, and we never knew what it was to want. My second was always kind, but often desponding, and for a time intemperate. He was unsuccessful in starting a newspaper in Fitchburg, and misfortunes continued to follow him here in attempting to establish himself in business. For the most part he worked at journey-work, and as long as he was able to work we lived comfortably well. But the last six years of his life he was an invalid, laid up with rheumatism. Our house was a place of resort for his acquaintances in the trade, so long as he was at work, but when sickness and poverty was creeping upon us, our company gradually diminished. In order to meet

the expenses of his sickness we began to pawn such articles as we could part with, and continued to do so until we parted with all we had. So when he was buried and the last bill paid, I had nothing left.'

\* \* \* , \* \* \* \* \*

"Up to this time my courage never failed me. I had followed my first kind husband to his grave, and all but one of our children, and she was the wife of a drunkard and the mother of this boy. She is dead now. My second husband I loved, took care of him in his sickness, and secured for him a christian burial; but there was none to care for me, or advise with and I took to drink.'

"This was her plain, simple, and, (having inquired of others,) we have reason for believing, her truthful narrative. Noble hearted woman! Houseless, homeless, friendless, widow of a printer! Yes, for six long years, that printer, away from home and friends, felt the affectionate influence of thy kind care in ministering to his wants when pining away in sickness and sinking under the acute pains of a most painful disease; and when he died, if he did not die, under thy kind care and teachings, a devout christian, he was a sober man; and in his last expiring agonies, if neither father, nor mother, nor brother, nor sister stood by his side to kiss his pallid cheek, or wipe the cold death sweat from his brow, thine own hand did it, thine own lips pressed his cheek; and when his eyes were closed forever upon thee, and no relative near to counsel or aid thee, or follow him to his final resting place, the tomb, it was thy honored privilege to give him a christian burial, and alone and lonely to shed thy tears over the grave of an affectionate husband, an unfortunate printer, and one of the pioneers of the art of Printing in the now thriving town of FITCHBURG."

John Page was born in Groton, June 5, 1810,—the family removing to Lunenburg soon after his birth. He died in New York City, October, 1856. Peace to his ashes!

The last number of the *Album* made its appearance in November, 1831. The following month Whitcomb sold one-half of his interest in the *Gazette* and printing office to Benaiah Cook, then principal of Fitchburg Academy. Three months later he disposed of his remaining interest to Cook, but continued to edit the paper till September, 1832, when his connection with it ceased.

He soon afterward left Fitchburg, changed his name to James E. Wharton, and located in Wheeling, Va., where, for some twenty years, he successfully conducted the *Wheeling Gazette and Times*,—daily, tri-weekly and weekly. That he became a useful and respected citizen, appears from the fact that he was chosen to various positions of honor and trust,—among others that of alderman of the city of Wheeling. For several years, after Whitcomb left Fitchburg, his whereabouts was unknown to his most intimate friends. Occasionally there would come through the mail copies of the *Wheeling Gazette*, directed to one or another of his old friends here, but none knew the source from which they came, or why they were sent. The paper bore the name of "J. E. Wharton, Editor,"—but that afforded no light, until, after a number of years, it became known that James E. Wharton was none other than their old-time friend Jonathan E. Whitcomb.

Mr. Wharton left Wheeling in 1855, removed to Ohio, and for several years published the *Massillon News*. In March, 1859, he commenced, in Brooklyn, N. Y., the publication of the *Brooklyn Daily Transcript*; but a year later, we find him in New York, practically "out of a job," so far as newspaper business was concerned. He accepted a position with the "United States Homestead and Land Company," and in a circular, issued by him at this time, he says of himself—"The undersigned has been publisher and editor of a daily paper for twenty-five years, mostly in Wheeling, Virginia, and for the past two years has been in this city, where he has formed a large circle of business and literary acquaintances, and obtained a knowledge of the Great Metropolis which requires time and energy;"—and he proposes to furnish, for a consideration, letters for the country press.

His estimate of life in the great city—and possibly a hint of his own experience there—may be gathered from a

paragraph in a letter to the *Sentinel* at this time. After referring to the two millions of people within the borders of New York, or deriving their living directly from that city, he continues:

"If I could speak a word to the young heart that would listen and open its doors wide to receive instruction, I would say to him that of the millions here most are disappointed in all their hopes; most are unhappy, many are miserable, and not a few have been wrecked in all that constitutes manhood. The true security, the true manhood, the true foundation for respectability and worth, is in the heart; but the most sure road to reach it is in the part of the world that God, not man, has made;—in the tilling of the soil, in the true home, where the affections have full play, where nature is, and where there are fewer claims upon the mind to feed the body."

A little later we find him giving advice (in pamphlet form) to the people of New York upon "the commercial position" of that city, "and a way to improve it;"—evidently written in the interest of some one of the numerous railroad enterprises connecting with that city. It was about this time—the summer of 1860—that the writer called on him at his New York office, and obtained many of the facts given in this sketch. In personal appearance he was tall, broad-shouldered and well proportioned,—of dark, swarthy complexion, with a profusion of dark hair and heavy eyebrows,—but with a kindly face and genial, pleasant manner, that at once made a stranger feel at ease in his presence. Never having previously met him, the interviewer looked upon him with a sensation of wonder, if not of admiration, as the man who had once had the courage to start a newspaper and a magazine, at the same time, in a small country town, like Fitchburg in 1830.

Questions in relation to the events of those early days led to his kindly offer to put in writing some reminiscences of Fitchburg and the introduction of printing in the town. The following paper was the result. As it has never been printed, its introduction here may be pardoned, even though



it be a repetition of some statements already made. It is entitled—

#### EARLY PRINTING IN FITCHBURG.

MESSRS. GARFIELD,—

*Gentlemen:* You ask me for information in relation to the founding of the newspaper now published by you, and the commencement of the printing business in Fitchburg. My knowledge of it is very limited, and a regret steals over me that there should now be in existence few or no records of a fact of so recent occurrence.

The first printing office and newspaper were established in Fitchburg in October, 1830, by J. E. Whitcomb, son of John Whitcomb, then living in the south part of the town.\* He had grown up in the town, had served a year to the printing business in Greenfield, worked two years for Mr. Jonas Marshall, in the fall of 1828 went to Boston and after working a year purchased a small office and commenced printing there. As above stated he removed the office to Fitchburg, and commenced the *Fitchburg Gazette*,—He being twenty [one] years of age. The size of the paper was what was then called super-royal, I think. The paper was manufactured by Mr. A. Crocker, at his mill, about a mile above the village. The first number of the paper was issued to one hundred and twenty-five subscribers. The printing office was in a frame building, erected by Mr. Pratt, below the entrance to the Fitchburg hotel stable. The upper story was used for the newspaper, and the lower for printing bibles from stereotype plates for Mr. Cushing of Lunenburg, and for a small circulating library. At the end of six or eight months he sold half the office to Benaiah Cook, and the establishment was carried on by them for six [three] months together, when Mr. Cook bought the other half, and Whitcomb continued to edit the paper until August, 1832, when he left, and the paper was edited for a time by the Hon. Nathaniel Wood.

In the office, when first established, Chapman, whose name became famous in Indiana, in 1840, as a man who was requested to "Crow," was an apprentice;—as were also a brother of his, and George D. Farwell. Farwell continued with Cook until 1834, when he purchased the office of Cook and continued the publication,—how long I do not know. The *Gazette* was started as a neutral paper; but came out against Gen. Jackson about the time of the dissolution of his cabinet.

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\* His omission to mention John Page, as having been a partner, was probably an oversight; as, in a later communication, he states fully Page's connection with him in the business.

Fitchburg was at that time, a comparatively small place, having, probably, not more than a thousand [two thousand] inhabitants, and I presume none of the early proprietors made a large fortune out of the newspaper or job printing. Most of the older prominent and influential citizens of Fitchburg at that time have been called home; but a few landmarks still remain. Among the most substantial citizens of the town were Messrs. Jonas Marshall, Ephraim Kimball, Deacon Caldwell, Francis Perkins, Benjamin Snow, Capt. Fox, Dr. Fox, Esquire Willard, Capt. Newton, Messrs. Town & Willis, Oliver Everett, (brother of Edward), Gen. Burbank, Isaiah Putnam, Capt. Sheldon, *old* Dr. Snow, whose smiling face and hearty look were sure to drive away disease,—and I presume many more equally good and true men, whom I do not now remember.

The Unitarian church was an ancient frame, and stood near where now stands the present neat brick one. Rev. Calvin Lincoln was then pastor. The Orthodox Congregational church was also a frame building, standing on the site of the present one. The post office was on the same side of Main street, a short distance above the church,—David Brigham, post-master. Nearly the only buildings not on Main street, in 1831, were the house of John Prichard and the Academy building; both I believe, built about that time.

I have extended this article farther than your inquiry seemed to contemplate, and perhaps farther than will be agreeable to you; but, when I think of the past of Fitchburg, my pen is slightly inclined to garrulity; and I think the names that I have mentioned as the men of influence in those days will bear repetition to our families as those of sterling worth. There was then a younger class of men,—many of whom are now among your most esteemed and wisest citizens, who have brought the town to its present prosperity and honor, among the towns of the good old Commonwealth,—who are doubtless equally worthy models of manhood; but their lives are still their record.

Yours,

J. E. WHARTON.

After leaving Fitchburg, in 1832, Mr. Wharton seldom came to revisit the scenes of his early years. His last visit here was in the autumn of 1880, when he stopped for some weeks at the Fitchburg Hotel, where he met an occasional friend of former days and enjoyed greatly the pleasures of social converse. He was then much interested in the election of Garfield and Arthur, republican candidates for the pend-

ing election. He left here some time before the election, for his home in Portsmouth, Ohio, where he died on the 2d of November, 1881. Of his life during the last twenty years the writer knows but little. In 1864 he was living in Parkersburg, West Virginia. He was born September 2, 1809, and died at the age of seventy-two;—leaving a son, who is a physician, and a daughter.

An obituary notice in the Portsmouth, Ohio, *Tribune and Republican* of November 9, 1881, refers to him as follows :

“Col. J. E. Wharton, whose illness we noticed in our last issue, died last Thursday night at half-past 11 o'clock. He had been in poor health since last winter, but his indomitable spirit of work prevailed to the last, and he can truly be said to have died in harness. Those who knew the Colonel best in life will agree that no death could have been more in accordance with his desires than that of falling at the post of duty. A man of culture and advanced ideas, he was ever at the front in enterprises for the public good. His religious belief was embodied in his favorite and oft-quoted phrase, “As the tree falleth, so shall it lie,” and to that end he labored to do all the good possible in this world, believing that in so acting he was doing what was pleasing in the sight of God.

“Col. Wharton was born at Heath, Massachusetts, in 1809, and was always proud to claim the old Bay State as the place of his birth. The best years of his life were spent in Wheeling, and that city to this day bears the impress of his wisdom and energy in many of her institutions and industries. In later years he was editor of the New York *Daily Star* and Brooklyn *Daily Transcript*, and the Parkersburg *Times* and Mansfield *Herald*. From Mansfield he came to this place in 1875, and Portsmouth has certainly had no more enterprising or energetic citizen than he proved to be. He became deeply interested in developing the mineral and agricultural resources of the county, and though stricken with age and broken in health, labored unceasingly to that end.

“To many he appeared to be in advance of the age, but we cannot avoid the conclusion that if his ideas were carried out the condition of our city and county would soon materially improve. He procured the right of way for the eastern division of the Cincinnati and Eastern railway, and labored for its completion up to the time of his death. His crowning work in this city, and the one which will stand as a monument to his courage, zeal and energy, was the establishment of the public li-

brary. The successful building up of this institution, now a necessity of our community, was due entirely to the personal efforts of Col. Wharton, and our citizens could not honor his memory in a more fitting manner than by liberally supporting it and carrying on his ideas in relation thereto.

It was through the efforts of Col. Wharton that Portsmouth was made a port of entry. He was appointed by President Hayes collector of the port, but did not live to see the full fruition of his labors. He worked for others, and was rather proud of the fact that he had never enriched himself pecuniarily during his long and eventful career. He will be missed in this community. He had a kind word for all, and many a silent tear will fall as the fact is realized that his familiar face and form will be seen upon our streets no more. His remains were taken to Mansfield, to be interred beside those of his wife.

## THE "OLD ROGERS BIBLE," SO CALLED.

*Abstract of a paper read before the Society, December 18, 1893.*

BY REV. GEO. M. BODGE, OF LEOMINSTER.

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I have not attempted to prepare a formal paper upon the subject of this occasion, but trust to the Old Bible itself to be its own best introduction, and am happy to be able to bring it here for the inspection of this Society,—as it was for many years a resident of your parent town of Lunenburg.

I have made a very careful examination of the book, page by page, and have scrutinized every mark, word or sign, made by pen or pencil, and have put every such mark under the microscope. I have found some things which I will not speak of here, as my theories drawn from them are mainly conjectural, but I will give you an outline description of the book as to its *contents*.

I will ask you to let me show it to you instead of passing it around, as the leaves are very frail and the owner enjoined the utmost care in handling.

Now a word first as to the *ownership* of the book, and how it came to the present owner's hands. The present owner is Henry Clinton Carter, of New York City, who brought the book to me at Leominster last September, for exhibition at our 150th Anniversary. He is the son of Jacob Sawyer Carter, who was a grandson of Eunice Peabody Carter, wife of Phineas of Lunenburg, grand-daughter of

Mrs. Susanna Rogers Peabody, who was daughter of Rev. John Rogers of Boxford, and sister of Rev. John of Leominster.

The Bible is supposed to have descended to Thomas Carter from his mother, Eunice Peabody, who received it from her grandmother, Susanna Rogers. Fifty years ago the Bible was in the possession of Thomas Carter of Lunenburg, who loaned it for use at the Centennial of the Church, to Dr. Stebbins, then minister at Leominster.

The description of the old Bible, as to contents, was very minute and exhaustive, but too extended for mention here. It contains no complete title page, but sufficient to show the monogram of the printers. The Old Testament lacks all of Genesis, and thirty-six chapters of Exodus. The Apocrypha and New Testament are entire. The style and type are of the middle of the 16th century. Much other matter, including manuscript leaves, was bound up with the Bible proper. The old-time Litany of the English Church, "A Calendar of Christian Holydayes," "An Almanacke," giving the date of Easter for seventeen years from 1559 on;—The "Golden Number" and the "Dominican Letter." "The Act of Uniformity" is included, and directions for worship,—Psalms for certain days,—Special Prayers "for the Queene," etc. etc. Then follow eighteen pages of Morning and Evening Prayers, supplemented with manuscript prayers, confessions and special forms of prayers for various occasions. At the end of the volume is the Old English edition of Metrical Psalms with the ancient music. This volume is now bound in calf, and the style of binding would indicate that it was bound in its present form more than one hundred years ago.

Next I will speak of the tradition which seems to have connected this Bible with the descendants of John Rogers, the proto-martyr, who was burned at the stake at Smithfield, 1555.

There was a widespread tradition in Eastern Massachusetts that Rev. Nathaniel Rogers, the celebrated minister of Ipswich, 1638-1655, was a grandson of John Rogers, the martyr. There is no evidence of the existence of this tradition until Gov. Hutchinson misquoted the historian, Mr. Hubbard, of Ipswich, who was contemporary with the said Rev. Nathaniel, married his only daughter, and wrote a biographical sketch of his wife's father, with references to *his* father, but makes no mention of his connection with the martyr, as Hutchinson carelessly represents him as doing. Mr. Hutchinson's history was published in England, 1765-6. It is likely that the descendants of Rev. Nathaniel seized upon this tradition and accepted it, although it was entirely unsupported by any other intimation of proof. Subsequent writers went right on perpetuating the error; and so Dr. Stebbins, in his Centennial discourse, assumed the truth of the tradition and quoted the authority of Mr. Felt, the historian of Salem, to prove the descent of our Leominster minister, John, from the martyr.

This Bible was the other supposed clue to our minister's descent from the martyr, which I have failed to trace beyond statements in Dr. Stebbins' notes to his published discourse at the Centennial of the Leominster Church, 1843. He says Thomas Carter of Lunenburg, then owner of the Bible, told him that his great uncle, who was a son of Susanna (Rogers) Peabody, declared to him, in his boyhood, that he was the *eleventh in descent from the martyr*. And again, a descendant of Sarah Bowers Rogers, who married Luke Johnson, through her descendants, gave the same testimony; but all this was based upon the supposition that they were descended from Nathaniel Rogers of Ipswich. Having this tradition of *descent*, and also the possession of this venerable Bible, it was easy to put the two traditions together, or to *add* the tradition that the book had come down from the martyr and now belonged to his posterity.

Dr. Stebbins fully believed that the book once belonged to the martyr of Smithfield, and that these scorched corners are proofs of his having held it in his hands as he died in the flames.

I will simply say that Dr. Stebbins made some investigations, such as were possible at that time, to confirm his belief about these matters, but was unable to obtain much light;—and so, while stating his inability to find evidence, in his *notes* to the published discourse, in the *discourse itself*, he repeatedly makes the statement that Mr. Rogers, the first minister of Leominster, was a descendant of John Rogers the martyr. He even went farther in his discourse, and composed an imaginary letter of John Rogers to the Leominster church, in which he makes Mr. Rogers say that he is a descendant of the martyr; which letter was so placed in the discourse that even good Deacon Wilder, when he wrote his history of Leominster, was misled by it, and incorporated it in his book as the genuine production of John Rogers, instead of Mr. Stebbins. An obscure reference in the notes alone intimates the authorship. I do not believe that Dr. Stebbins meant to mislead, but wished to impress his hearers with the noble character and grand heroism of John Rogers, whom he greatly admired and sought to present as a worthy descendant of the proto-martyr.

Soon after the publication of Dr. Stebbins' discourse, Mr. James Savage of Boston, the most eminent antiquarian of Massachusetts at that time, hearing of the claim made for the old Bible, and the family descent, began investigating. A leaf of the old Bible was procured and sent to London to Mr. George Offor, the foremost authority on ancient bible editions,—he having access to, if not charge of, the great collection of bibles in the British Museum. It will be understood that the earliest editions of the bible were distinguished by peculiar traits and internal character-



istics; so that, though no date appears upon this book, and the title page is lost, it was possible at once to compare it with other editions, and to decide as definitely its date of publication as though it bore the impress of month and year. It bears the monogram of John Cawood, who published several editions both before and after the martyr's death; but the leaf of this Bible proved beyond question that it was published in the year 1561, six years after the burning at Smithfield.

I will also say that now there is a work published, in which all the old editions of the English Bible are minutely described; and a few weeks ago I took the old Bible down to Boston and spent some time comparing its characteristics with those of various editions. I tested it in a variety of ways. The width of the page from margin to margin; the number of lines from top to bottom; the sequence of matter at the end of the New Testament, and other minor points which varied in each edition, and I arrived independently, at the inevitable conclusion that the Bible is of the edition of 1561;—while the martyr suffered death in 1555.

In connection with the history of this Bible, Mr. Bodge gave much interesting matter concerning the genealogy of the Rogers family, of whom Mr. Carter, the owner of this book, is probably the last descendant.

## CAPTAIN EBENEZER BRIDGE.

*Read at a meeting of the Society, February 19, 1894.*

BY JAMES F. D. GARFIELD.

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During the past year this Society has been the active agent in procuring the erection of a monument bearing the name of Captain Ebenezer Bridge, the leader of the minute-men of Fitchburg at the opening of the war of the Revolution. The city government of 1893, by its action in appropriating money for the erection of the memorial to Captain Bridge, recognizes him as an active and worthy participant in the events of the early history of the town.

With these facts before us the questions naturally follow;—Who was Ebenezer Bridge?—and what of his deeds, his character and personality? To these inquiries the inscription upon the memorial makes no answer, beyond the bare statement that he led the minute-men to the scene of action on the 19th of April, 1775. Scant mention is made of Captain Bridge in any printed history of the town. Torrey, to be sure, and perhaps later historians, give the location of his Fitchburg home, and mention him as one of an important committee chosen by the town to consider and decide on the stand to be taken by the citizens looking to the defence of the people's rights. But even this record of him, taken in connection with his prompt response to the call of the Colony to its defence, shows him to have been an ardent patriot, and a man of action, as well as of decision and firmness of character.

Ebenezer Bridge came of good Puritan stock,—in fact there was none better in New England; and it is fair to presume that many of the qualities that shone prominently in his ancestry were inherited by him. Indeed, the “Autocrat of the Breakfast Table” has humorously said that a man’s education begins a hundred years before he is born,—so surely and plainly does the influence of heredity crop out in individual character; and there is true philosophy, as well as humor, in the statement. And, since we find little on record concerning Captain Bridge’s own personality, let us look for a moment at the character of some of his ancestors.\*

Captain Bridge was born in the town of Lexington, Massachusetts, February 3, 1742; and was in the fifth generation from his immigrant ancestor, Deacon John Bridge, who came to America with Hooker’s company in 1632, and settled in Cambridge. In 1634 Hooker, with the larger part of his company, removed to Connecticut, but John Bridge decided to stick to his new home; and it was through his efforts that Rev. Thomas Shepard was induced to come from England to become the pastor of the few who remained at Cambridge after the removal of Hooker.

In 1635, at the organization of the first church in the New Town, as Cambridge was then called, John Bridge was chosen its first deacon,—“the most honored office a layman could then hold, an office which implied that its holder was recognized as a head man in the community, not less than in the church.” He was also one of the first board of selectmen, a member of the general court, and had to do with the management of the first schools of the infant settlement. It was partly through his help, with the

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\* The writer is indebted to “An Account of the Descendants of John Bridge, Cambridge, 1632,” by Rev. Wm. F. Bridge, for much information concerning the Bridge ancestry.

influence of Rev. Thomas Shepard, that Harvard College was established; and there now stands on Cambridge Common, in full view of the college buildings, an ideal statue in bronze, erected to the memory of John Bridge, the Puritan.

The second in the line of Captain Bridge's ancestry was Matthew Bridge, who came from England with his father and settled in Cambridge. He inherited from his father lands not only in Cambridge, but also at Cambridge Farms, which afterwards became the town of Lexington. The Bridge homestead in Cambridge has become historic ground. It was located on what is known as the Craigie estate, where Washington had his head-quarters during the siege of Boston, and which in more recent years became the home of the poet Longfellow.

Matthew Bridge removed from Cambridge to Lexington,—or Cambridge Farms as it was then called,—where he was one of the largest land-holders. When the Parish of Lexington was organized he assisted in the organization; and when the first meeting-house was built, he contributed as largely as any for that purpose. When the first parish tax was laid he was one of the four leading tax-payers. As a mark of distinction, and in deference to his age, he was seated at the table in the meeting-house, by order of the parish.

It is a noteworthy fact that during the great witchcraft delusion the people of Cambridge were little troubled by presumed cases of that character;—and it is creditable to the general intelligence of the community that, in perhaps the only important instance of supposed witchcraft there, the victims were declared innocent. Two certificates to the christian character of Winnifret Holman, and to her freedom from all signs of possession, were presented in court, and we may suppose released her from her danger. These certificates yet remain on file, and are gratifying

witnesses to the good sense and intelligence of John Palfrey and Matthew Bridge, who are prominent signers of the one—and Anne (Danforth) Bridge, Elizabeth Bridge \* and John Bridge, who signed the other.

The third in line of the Bridge ancestry was Matthew Bridge, Jr. He was a grandson of Deacon John, and seems to have inherited the traits of both his father and grandfather; being of a sturdy spirit and of strict integrity. He served as a soldier in King Philip's war, and also in the ill-fated Canada expedition of 1690. He settled in Lexington between 1660 and 1670, and on the death of his father, in 1700, inherited a large tract of land in the Precinct, comprising about six hundred acres. He seems to have given himself to the service of the settlement with even more than his father's energy;—serving the town on its organization as its selectman and its clerk, and for many years as its treasurer. He was also a prominent member of the church. Upon the marriage of his four sons he presented to each of them, from his own large estate, one hundred acres of land, and built for each a substantial dwelling house of two stories, in the best style of the time. These houses are still standing in a good state of preservation.

Of the four sons of Matthew Bridge, Jr., the third was John, who also became a prominent citizen of Lexington, following in the footsteps of his father by "serving in all the offices which the town had to give." He was the father of three sons and two daughters. The sons were John, Josiah and Ebenezer. The last named—the subject of this sketch—married and settled in Fitchburg; became

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\* Elizabeth Bridge, daughter of Matthew and Anne (Danforth) Bridge, born August 17, 1659, married, January 19, 1678, Capt. Benjamin Garfield, of Watertown. From this union was descended, in the seventh generation, James Abram Garfield, late President of the United States.

an active and a trusted member of this community, and made the town his home for a period of twenty or more years.

This hasty glance at the ancestry of Captain Bridge shows his progenitors to have been energetic, upright, religious and patriotic citizens; interested in everything that pertained to the welfare of the communities in which they lived. Some idea of the personal appearance of the Bridges might be gathered from the descriptions given of particular individuals of the family. But a single instance will be given. Matthew Bridge, the third of the name, was a graduate of Harvard, 1741, and became the minister of Framingham. He was an uncle of the Fitchburg captain. On the breaking out of the Revolution he was one of the first of the chaplains to volunteer. It is related that when Washington took command of the army at Cambridge Chaplain Bridge had his place assigned by the side of the new commander, under the great elm, and that his appearance on horseback bore so close a resemblance to the commander-in-chief that it was difficult to tell them apart. He was over six feet in height, with erect form, piercing black eyes, and very black hair that fell in curls over his coat collar. As he was one of the first of his profession to offer his services to his country during the war, so he was one of the first martyrs of the contest. A disease contracted by camp exposure proved fatal on the 2d of September, 1775. The town of Framingham, in 1779, voted to erect a monument to his memory,—but the vote was never carried out.

There were two of the Bridge name in Captain Parker's company on Lexington Common, on the 19th of April, 1775,—one of whom was John Bridge, an elder brother of Ebenezer. He was afterwards major in the military service, and took part in the battle of Bunker Hill. At Lexington—

"John Danforth was hit just in Lexington street,  
John Bridge at that lane where you cross Beaver Falls;

\* \* \* \* \*

I took Bridge on my knee; but he said, 'Don't mind me;  
Fill your horn from mine—let me lie where I be.'

'Our fathers,' says he, 'that their sons might be free,  
Left their king on his throne and came over the sea;  
And that man is a knave or a fool who, to save  
His life, for a minute would live like a slave.'"

He survived his injuries, and became a trusted soldier, a wise adviser in the Committee of Safety, and later did good service in civil life as selectman, as a justice of the peace, and in the oversight of the schools.

The second in age of the two brothers of Ebenezer Bridge was Josiah, who graduated from Harvard, in 1758, and was ordained to the ministry at East Sudbury, now Wayland, in 1761. Graduating from college at the age of eighteen, and called to the charge of a parish before he was twenty-two,—being endowed with a strong mind, sound judgment and good scholarship,—he soon became distinguished as a preacher. Favored with a fine personal appearance, he is said to have united therewith a pleasantness, a solemnity and dignity in voice, style and manner; seldom found combined in one person. He presided at councils—was continually in request at ordinations and other public occasions. He preached an Election sermon, a Convention sermon, and read at the University the Dudleian Lecture. All these honors together were very rarely conferred on one minister. Ministers, churches and societies, involved in trouble, sought his advice and influence as peace-maker and judge. "The praise of Bridge," says Rev. Dr. McKean, fourteen years after Bridge's decease,—“The praise of Bridge, a goodly man and faithful, is still in all the churches.”

Ebenezer, the youngest of the three sons of John Bridge,—and the subject of this sketch—married November 3, 1763, at Lunenburg, Mehitable, daughter of Jonathan and Sarah

Wood—who was born December 23, 1741—and settled in that part of Lunenburg which was set off the following year and incorporated as the town of Fitchburg. His home was on what was then known as the Crown Point road—on that portion now known as the Richardson road—about midway between the present Ashby and Fisher roads. The records show him to have been active and helpful in town affairs,—being chosen to various positions, from those of fire-warden and constable to that of select-man. In 1771 he was one of the thirteen highest tax-payers in the town.

He had ten children, all of whom, except the youngest, were born in Fitchburg; and all but one of whom lived to years of maturity and were married. Their names were Sarah, born 1764; Ebenezer, 1766; Mehitabel, 1768; Bezaleel, 1770; John, 1775; Elizabeth, 1777; Jonathan, 1778; James, 1781; William, 1783 and Jonathan, 1787. In the old cemetery on South street in this city is an ancient slate-stone tablet which tells its pathetic story in the following words—

*"Memento Mori.*

Erected to the memory of Jonathan Bridge,  
Son of Coll<sup>n</sup> Ebenezer Bridge & Mrs. Mehitabel his wife,  
who died November 20th, 1781, aged 3 years,  
9 months & 18 days.

Fresh as y<sup>e</sup> morn y<sup>e</sup> Summer Rose  
Hangs withered ere its noon;  
We scarce enjoy y<sup>e</sup> balmy Gift  
But mourn y<sup>e</sup> pleasure gone."

The little grave is crowded on either side by other mounds, with other tablets erected to the memory of the dead; but no other trace of the Bridge name appears in any of the cemeteries of the city.

In the troublous times preceding the outbreak of the Revolution the people of Fitchburg were thoroughly alive to the critical condition of public affairs. While entertaining sentiments of loyalty to the government of the mother



country, they were determined to resist any encroachments upon their rights, and took measures to place themselves in a condition to respond to any reasonable call that might be made upon them for the defence of their liberties.

In September, 1768, the citizens met and chose, in connection with the town of Lunenburg, Hon. Edward Hartwell as their agent to confer with the authorities of Boston. The course of events soon began to point to the necessity of preparation for possible open rebellion. In response to a letter from the town of Boston, a town meeting was held on the first of December, 1773, at which a committee was chosen, consisting of Isaac Gibson, Capt. Reuben Gibson, Phinehas Hartwell, Ebenezer Woods, Ebenezer Bridge, Kendall Boutelle and Solomon Steward, to consider the situation and report at an adjourned meeting. At the time appointed a lengthy report was made and adopted by the town, in which the voters resolved to stand by their rights, "fully persuaded that liberty is a most precious gift of the Creator to all mankind, of such a nature that no person or community can part with it; and consequently no man or number of men can have a right to exercise despotism or tyranny over their fellow creatures." Continuing, they say—"We think it our indispensable duty to make the most public declaration in our power on the side of liberty; and we assure you we will not be found wanting—at all times according to our small ability—in promoting, by all lawful and constitutional means, the continuance of our rights and privileges, both civil and religious." Ebenezer Bridge being a member of the committee, the words quoted may be considered as embodying his sentiments.

In October, 1774, a Provincial Congress was called, at which Deacon David Goodridge of Fitchburg was a delegate. It convened at Concord, but soon adjourned to Cambridge. A plan was drawn up by this body for the defence of the Province, in which it was provided that at

least one-fourth part of the militia of the several towns should be enrolled as minute-men, to be prepared to march at a minute's warning on any emergency.

The selectmen of Fitchburg proceeded immediately to carry out the recommendation of the Congress. A quantity of powder, lead and flints was provided; and a minute company was enrolled, consisting of something over forty men, of which Ebenezer Bridge was chosen captain. The company was regularly drilled, their armory or gathering place being at the store of Deacon Ephraim Kimball—near the present stone mill of J. Cushing & Co., Laurel street. An "alarm list" was also enrolled, composed of the aged and the young, and frequent meetings were held for exercise and drill. In January, 1775, the town chose a committee to review and inspect the minute company.

The events here narrated show to what extent the people were being prepared for the important crisis which was then near at hand, the opening scene of the Revolution. The day of debate had passed, and the day of action had come; active preparations were making in all parts of the Province. The eventful 19th of April at length dawned. The British regulars, having stealthily left their quarters in Boston, were engaged in making their raid on Lexington and Concord; but the news of their march had preceded them. The ride of Paul Revere was supplemented by swift couriers who carried the intelligence to the more distant towns in the interior. At nine o'clock in the forenoon the alarm was fired in Fitchburg, and the minute company was soon ready, with full ranks, to take up its line of march. A deep feeling of anxiety pervaded the community. The people knew, that to resist the King's troops would be treason, which they might be called upon to expiate upon the gallows. But, fearful as was the crisis, they did not falter. The resolve had been taken with due deliberation, and by it they were determined to stand.

Captain Bridge's company reached Concord the same evening, but too late to participate in the action. Another company of Fitchburg men followed on the same day under the command of Captain Ebenezer Woods,—which company was made up from men composing the alarm list. Captain Bridge's company numbered forty-two men, and Captain Woods' company consisted of twenty-nine. These, with two others,—John Gibson, who joined the Ashby company, and Elijah Garfield, who went with Captain Wilder's company of Leominster,—made up the number of Fitchburg men who responded to the Lexington alarm. With less than one hundred and seventy men of the age of sixteen years and upward—and only eleven years from the date of its incorporation—the town turned out seventy-three men, nearly one-half the number capable of bearing arms, in answer to the first call of the Province for its defence.

It is somewhat difficult to trace Captain Bridge's record through the eight years war of the Revolution. Care has to be taken not to confound him with Col. Ebenezer Bridge of Chelmsford, who fought under Prescott, and was wounded at Bunker Hill;—and who, as Frothingham says, though wounded in the head and in the neck, was one of the last to retreat. This Col. Bridge was a son of Rev. Ebenezer Bridge of Chelmsford; and after the war lived for a time at Worcester, and was for many years a county officer in Middlesex County.

From documents on file at the State House, however, we are able to gain some knowledge of the record of Captain Bridge of Fitchburg. There is still preserved his pay-roll for the Fitchburg minute-men, the heading of which reads —“Capt. Ebenezer Bridge's Muster Roll in Col. John Whitcomb's Regiment of Minute Men, that marched from Fitchburg to Cambridge on y<sup>e</sup> Alarm, April 19th, 1775.”

Soon after their arrival at Cambridge, Captain Bridge's company and Captain John Fuller's company of Lunenburg were consolidated, under the command of Captain Fuller, with Bridge as lieutenant. Captain Fuller's pay-roll of August 1, 1775, assigns him the rank of lieutenant. By a regimental return, dated February 7, 1776, he appears to have been promoted to the rank of major of the 8th Worcester County regiment, commanded by Col. Abijah Stearns. Later the same year he was advanced to the position of lieutenant-colonel of the same regiment, with John Rand as colonel.

In 1777, the year of the battles of Bennington and Saratoga, there are pay-rolls showing service in the Continental army by reason of the alarm from Bennington, "by order of Gen. Stark and Col. Warner;" — "Major Ebenezer Bridge had full command of the Regiment, by order of Col. Stearns." It seems the regiment was too late to share in Stark's victory, for the document states that they marched ninety miles toward Bennington, being then dismissed by order of General Lincoln. A further return, for service of the regiment at Saratoga—"agreeable to a resolve of the General Court, September 22, 1777,"—mentions Major Bridge as being still in full command of the regiment. Burgoyne's surrender took place in October of this year, at which the regiment was undoubtedly present.

In June, 1779, Bridge held the position of major in the regiment under Colonel Josiah Carter, with Rand as lieutenant-colonel. A few weeks later he had again become lieutenant-colonel, with Colonel John Rand as commander. Further research would be necessary to determine the date of his commission as colonel, the rank to which he is said to have attained before the close of the war.

Soon after the close of the Revolution, Colonel Bridge left Fitchburg with his family and removed to Hartland, Windsor County, Vermont, where he remained, devoting

himself to agriculture, until his death in 1823. A great-grandson, now residing in California, writes concerning him as follows:—"That he was a man of strong personal characteristics is apparent from the accounts given of him. Removing to Vermont while his children were still quite young, he had a hard struggle to maintain his family and give his children a start in the world. The latter were all vigorous characters, and were moving forces in the communities in which they lived;—and all had honorable, albeit humble, careers."

Of Colonel Bridge's third son, John, who was born in Fitchburg in 1775, it is said, "He was a farmer, an assistant judge of Windsor County, Vermont, from 1820 to 1825. One of the best of men, a *good representative of his father*. At one time the wealthiest man in his neighborhood, and of greatest influence, he died in comparative poverty. But he did not part with his integrity;—he was an honest, upright man through all."

Further reference need not be made here to Colonel Bridge's descendants,—many of whom, in the third and fourth generations, are known to occupy honorable and responsible positions in their respective communities.

Of Colonel Ebenezer Bridge it may be said, as was said of his ancestor, John Bridge, the Puritan:—"He was a man of 'deeds not words;'—so we have little but the record of what he did or was called to do, by which to judge of him. But the things he was set to do—so numerous, so important for the service of the infant colony—prove him to have been of good common sense, of sound, roundabout judgment, of unbending integrity and of an unwearied energy. He made these qualities serve for a liberal education and for a high descent."

Colonel Bridge died February 13, 1823. His widow died July 20, 1825. An obituary notice of him says that—"he entered the army of the Revolution as captain, soon

after the battle of Lexington, and served throughout the war; being afterwards major and then colonel. When the war broke out he had a handsome property; its termination left him poor." One who remembered him characterized him as "a kind father, a benevolent man, with a will as strong as his affections."

On the Vermont side of the Connecticut river—at the junction of the four towns of Reading, Windsor, Hartland and Woodstock—there is an ancient cemetery, which lies just within the borders of Woodstock. Here, for a hundred years, many of the dead of these four towns have been consigned to the earth. And here there is a stone bearing the following inscription:

"The grave of

COLO. EBENEZER BRIDGE.

He officiated as an officer in the American Revolution;  
was a Zealous Defender of the People's Rights  
Through the long Struggle for Independence.

He was born in Lexington, Mass.,

And died in Hartland,

February 13th, 1823,

Aged 81 years."

## THE FITCHBURG PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

*A paper read before the Society, April 16, 1894.*

BY EBENEZER BAILEY.

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In the year 1830, the population of the town of Fitchburg was 2180. It was a busy, thriving place with every indication of further growth. Young men from adjoining towns, and from places still farther away, had come here to make it a starting point for a professional or business career. Here, too, was literary activity and a genuine desire for knowledge. Go back one hundred years and there were very few books in the homes of the people, and, even in 1830, books and papers were much more of a novelty and a luxury than to-day. But about this time there was a forward literary movement throughout the whole country, and books of both American and English authors were being rapidly printed and circulated.

In this town, probably in the year 1829, the Fitchburg Philosophical Society was formed. Its constitution and by-laws, and the records of its secretary cannot be found, but it was a society which met once a week (at least in the earlier portion of its history) for essays, lectures or declamations; at first, in the yellow school-house, which stood on the corner of Main and Mechanic streets, and later, in the new Academy, near the site of our present high school building.

The only written record of the society, of which I have any knowledge, is a little blank-book, recently presented to

our organization by the daughters of the late Abel F. Adams. It contains, written in a small, but plain and even handwriting, the names of the members of the Fitchburg Philosophical Society in February, 1830, with a list of the lectures, dissertations and declamations, for that year, and the names of the participants. The little book reads as follows, (a few given names being supplied in place of initials):

MEMBERS OF FITCHBURG PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

Abel F. Adams,	Stephen T. Farwell,	Ivers Phillips,
B. Arnold,	J. Farwell,	Sullivan G. Proctor,
Dr. Otis Abercrombie,	Barker Gibson,	Ezra W. Reed,
David Baldwin,	Asher Green,	M. Richardson,
✓ J. A. Boutelle,	✓ Jefferson A. Goodrich,	J. Raymond,
David Brigham,	J. Hanscomb,	Benjamin Snow,
Jonathan Burrage,	Samuel Hawes,	Dr. Peter S. Snow,
N. Bradford,	F. Hodgman,	Wm. H. Snow,
Wilson Baxter,	Jonathan Haskell,	Capt. Zachariah Sheldon,
Stephen Caswell,	✓ Abijah Hartwell,	Justin Stearns,
Samuel M. Caswell,	Moses E. Hale,	David Taylor,
Thomas C. Caldwell,	Henry Hill,	Ebenezer Torrey, Esq.,
Enoch Caldwell,	✓ Ivers Jewett,	William Torrey,
Benaiah Cook,	✓ I. T. Jewett,	Cyrus Thurston,
✓ Alvah Crocker,	C. Jewett,	Jacob Tolman,
John Caldwell,	John L. Joslin,	Nathan Tolman,
George J. Curtis,	Benjamin J. Kendall,	Abial J. Towne,
Samuel Davis,	✓ Ephraim Kimball,	Almanza Tufts,
Samuel Devens,	A. Kimball, 2d,	Nathan A. Tufts,
Joseph Downe, Esq.,	✓ David Lowe,	Daniel Tuttle,
Levi Downe,	Rev. Calvin Lincoln,	Duncan Turner,
C. Darling,	Lewis L. Morse,	Thomas Upton,
A. Derby,	Jonas A. Marshall,	Joseph Willard,
Joseph Derby,	Horace Messenger,	Nathaniel Wood, Esq.,
Amos Durant,	Capt. Horace Newton,	Timothy S. Wilson,
Samuel M. Dole,	Martin S. Newton,	John H. Wheeler,
John Dole,	Capt. Martin Newton,	Payson Williams,
Abel Eaton,	H. M. Osgood,	Samuel Willis,
Oliver Everett, Jr.,	G. T. Parker,	John Wood,
J. Fairbanks,	John Prichard,	Isaac B. Woodward,
Oliver Fox,	✓ Joseph Petts,	Jonathan E. Whitcomb,
Abel Fox,	L. Pease,	John Whitcomb,
Joseph D. Fox,	✓ Rev. Rufus A. Putnam,	J. D. Williams,
C. H. Fox,	I. P. Putnam,	Dr. Charles W. Wilder,
Oliver H. Fox,	Barney Pratt,	Daniel Works.
Alfred Fox,		



A list of one hundred and six names, of whom only four, Ivers Phillips, Thos. C. Caldwell, Thomas Upton and S. G. Proctor, are to my knowledge, living to-day. Then follows a list of

LECTURES, DISSERTATIONS, DECLAMATIONS AND DEBATES  
BEFORE THE FITCHBURG PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

- Feb. 4th. Lecture by Samuel Devens, on the "Atmosphere."  
Feb. 11th. Dissertation on "Elocution." Declamations by Marshall, Tufts, Arnold and Wood.  
Feb. 18th. Lecture by Rev. R. A. Putnam, on the "Nature of Evidence."  
Feb. 25th. Declamations by Green, Phillips, Woodward, Petts, Putnam, and Parker. Dialogue by Tufts and Boutelle.  
March 4th. Lecture by J. A. Marshall, on "Electricity."  
March 11th. Dissertation on "Mohammedanism," by Samuel Devens. Declamations by Joslin, Eaton, Newton and Alfred Fox.  
March 18th. Lecture on "Geology," by Nathaniel Wood, Esq.  
March 25th. Declamations by Downe, Dole, Hale and Boutelle. Debate on the question "Would it be for the good of society to dispense with mourning apparel, on the decease of friends?" Disputants, J. Downe and M. Newton.  
April 1st. Declamation, by Mr. Cook's scholars, and debate, etc.  
April 8th. Lecture on "Hydrostatics," by D. Brigham, Esq.  
April 16th. Lecture on "Heat," by Almanza Tufts.  
April 22d. Dissertation on "Habit," by Nathaniel Wood, Esq. Declamations by F. Hodgman and O. Everett, Jr. Dialogue by A. T. Jewett and Thos. Caldwell.  
April 29th. Lecture on "Agriculture," by Payson Williams, Esq.  
May 6. Declamations by Putnam, Parker, Petts, Green and Dole. Debate concerning the "Public Execution of Criminals."  
May 13. Lecture on "Optics," by Rev. Calvin Lincoln.  
May 20. Dissertation on the "Evidences of the Goodness of God, independent of Revelation." Declamation by O. Everett. Dialogue by Downe and Petts.  
Sept. 2d. Lecture on "Mental Philosophy," by Rev. Rufus A. Putnam.  
Sept. 9th. Address of Mr. Brougham, read by Wm. Torrey.  
Sept. 16th. Lecture on the "Atmosphere," by Almanza Tufts.

- Sept. 23d. Debate on the question, "Will the French Revolution result in a Republican form of Government?"
- Sept. 30th. Lecture on "Man," by Nath'l Wood, Esq.
- Oct. 7th. Debate on the question, "Is Science of more Importance to the Professional Man than to the Mechanic and Manufacturer?"
- Oct. 14th. Lecture on "Consumption," by Dr. Charles W. Wilder.
- Oct. 21st. Debate, same as Oct. 7th.
- Oct. 28th. Part of the life of Sir Humphrey Davy, read by Almanza Tufts.
- Nov. 11th. Lecture, by D. Brigham, Esq., on "Mercantile Law."
- Nov. 18th. Dissertation, by I. P. Putnam, on the "Fate of Genius."
- Dec. 3d. Lecture on "Motion," by Wm. Torrey.
- Dec. 16th. Lecture on "Geography," by Ivers Phillips.
- Dec. 23d. Lecture on "History," by J. E. Whitcomb.
- Dec. 30th. Debate. Question, "Was Napoleon a benefit to the World?"
- Feb. 3d, 1831. Lecture on "Improvement of the Mind," by Oliver Everett.
- Feb. 10th. Debate. Question, "Was Washington a greater man than LaFayette?"
- March 3d. Lecture on "Sound," by Henry Hill.

These essays, lectures, declamations and debates were distinctly a part of the social and literary life of Fitchburg at this time; and the yellow school-house, or the upper story of the new Academy building, used to be filled with an eager and interested audience, when some rising and popular young man was to read an essay or deliver a lecture. Col. Ivers Phillips was one of these young men, coming over as he did from Pearl Hill, where he was keeping school, and delivering a lecture on Geography, on the evening of Dec. 16, 1830, to a large audience, in the Academy. Benjamin Snow, Sr., was then president. The *Fitchburg Gazette*, of Dec. 23d, 1830, contains a half-column notice of this lecture, of which the following is a portion:

"The lecture delivered on Thursday evening, last, before the Philosophical Society in this town, on Geography, besides being in itself very able and instructive, served to elicit from some gentlemen present many

very interesting remarks concerning the formation of alluvial soil and the alterations in the face of our country, brought about by obstructions in rivers, which must continually operate to change their course, and in many cases to entirely throw them out of their original channel. The mutations of our own stream were noticed; and from observations we find positive evidence of its having formerly pursued a course, in some places, twenty rods from its present one, and over land that now lies several feet above the level of its present bed; and from appearances we should suppose that the whole ground where our village now stands was at no very remote period wholly inundated during the more wet seasons of the year. This is only one among the many changes in the face of our country without the aid of art."

In connection with, and owned by the Philosophical Society was a library, kept in the office of Dr. Jonas A. Marshall, which was a one-story wooden building, standing on the grounds of James Phillips, Jr., not far from the school house. In 1835 this library had accumulated 150 volumes. The nucleus of this library, and a most important part of it, was Rees' Cyclopædia, of 47 quarto volumes (6 volumes consisting entirely of plates). These have come down to us through the Fitchburg Library Association and the Fitchburg Athenæum, and are now to be found in the reference room of our Public Library.

Rees' Cyclopædia was published in England in 1810, and it would not be far from right to say that it was the foundation of our modern cyclopædias. Certainly it was at that time a very valuable work, and it is very creditable to those who organized and managed the Society that its purchase was brought about. This edition was a re-print, published in Philadelphia, in 1824. It probably cost considerably less than the price of the original edition, which was eighty-five pounds. Its articles are well written, and admirably adapted for lectures or essays on all the subjects on which it treats, and its volumes used to be borrowed and perused by the members of the Society. The title page reads as follows:

THE CYCLOPÆDIA OR UNIVERSAL DICTIONARY

Of Arts, Sciences and Literature,

BY ABRAHAM REES, D. D., F. R. S., F. L. S.

With the assistance of Eminent Professional Gentlemen. Illustrated with numerous engravings by the most Distinguished Artists.

FIRST AMERICAN EDITION.

Revised, corrected, enlarged and adapted to this country by several Literary and Scientific Characters. In forty-one volumes.

PHILADELPHIA :

Published by Sam'l F. Bradford and Murray, Fairman & Co.

In his preface, Dr. Rees says :

"The Cyclopædia, which has been the production of the incessant labor of almost twenty years, is now completed. If the Editor had foreseen the time and attention which the completion and conduct of it required, and the unavoidable anxiety which it has occasioned, he would probably never have undertaken it. But habits of application, and some degree of experience in a work of this nature, disposed him to embark in it, and enabled him to overcome the difficulties that presented themselves to his view in his further progress.

"The work was extended beyond the limits at first prescribed, owing to the wishes of a number of esteemed subscribers. The plates, also, were multiplied far beyond the original intention of the proprietors. But it was their determination to make the work of the greatest value and utility, though the sales were less and the cost greater."

Allibone's Dictionary of Authors, published in 1872, says of Dr. Rees :

"A learned Unitarian, born in 1743, and died in 1825. He was a native of Llanbrynmair, Montgomeryshire, studied under Dr. David Jennings: in 1768 became pastor of a congregation at St. Thomas, Southwark, and was minister at the Old Jewry, London, 1783 to 1823. His cyclopædia has been superseded, but is well worth the small amount now demanded for it, containing, as it does, many excellent articles."

The London *Gentlemen's Magazine* said of him, at his death:—"His urbanity and placidity of disposition secured the esteem of all who approached him."

We have now traced the Philosophical Society, by its list of exercises, to the lecture on Sound, by Henry Hill,

March 3d, 1831. From that date our knowledge of it is gleaned mainly from notices in the *Fitchburg Gazette* and the *Worcester County Courier*. Of the *Gazette* only an incomplete file for a single year, and a few scattering numbers of that and the *Courier*, of a later date, are now known to exist. From these only an imperfect account of the doings of the Society can be given.

From the *Fitchburg Gazette* of March 22, 1831, we take the following notice: "The Fitchburg Philosophical Society will meet at the Academy Hall on Thursday next, at 7 o'clock, P. M.—Proceedings:—A lecture on the 'Power of Steam.' Also, the 3d in the course of lectures on the 'History of New England.'"

On Sept. 22, 1831, as we learn from the *Fitchburg Gazette*, there was a discussion on the "best means of improving our public schools." On Oct. 13, the question for debate was, "Is the present tariff a benefit to the manufacturing or agricultural interests of the country?"

Oct. 21st, a lecture was delivered by Nathaniel Wood, Esq., on the "History of Fitchburg;" Oct. 28, a lecture by Rev. Calvin Lincoln; Nov. 11, a lecture on the "History of Fitchburg," by Nathaniel Wood, Esq.; Nov. 25, a lecture by A. Locke, Esq., of Ashby: Subject, "Biography;" Dec. 2d, a lecture by William Torrey on "Mythology."

In the *Gazette*, of December 6, 1831, we find the following notice:

"FITCHBURG PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

The Fitchburg Philosophical Society will meet on Friday evening next. A lecture by B. Cook; subject, "Chemistry." After which a dissertation on "Physiognomy."

*Fitchburg Gazette, Dec. 13, 1831.*

"ASTRONOMY. A lecturer, who has devoted his attention exclusively to the above science, and who has lectured for some years in the principal cities of the United States, has been engaged by the Philosophical Society, in this town, to deliver a course of eight lectures at the Academy Hall. The gentleman is furnished with lantern, etc. The first lecture will be

given this evening (Tuesday). Terms of admission, to those who are not members of the Society, 37½ cents the course; those who are, will be admitted as to the regular meetings. Commences at 7 o'clock."

*Fitchburg Gazette, Dec. 27, 1831.*

"The Fitchburg Philosophical Society will meet on Thursday evening next. A lecture on Astronomy from Mr. Worcester. He will also lecture this and to-morrow evenings. Tickets for the course may be had at this office at 18 cents, or evening tickets, 6 cents."

January 6, 1832. Lecture by Dr. O. Abercrombie. Subject, "Anatomy."

January 13. "A lecture by —. Subject, 'History of Chivalry.'"

January 19. Lecture by Horace Dupee, of Leominster.

February 10. Lecture by Mr. Leonard K. Hatch, on the "Philosophy of Language," and Sketches of a Tour through Europe.

February 17. "Continuation of 'Sketches of a Tour in Europe,' with a variety of Declamations, will be the exercises of the evening."

March 2. Lecture by C. Wardsworth, Esq., of Barre.

March 16. Lecture by Payson Williams, Esq.

March 23. Lecture by Mr. Ezra W. Reed, on "Intellectual Education;" to be followed on ensuing evenings by one from J. E. Whitcomb, (March 30) on "Moral Education;" and one from William Torrey, on "Physical Education."

April 27. Lecture by a gentleman from Ashby.

May 3d. Debate. "Is Mechanical or Agricultural Employment most favorable to Intellectual Improvement?"

May 18. Lecture by Oliver Everett, Esq.

June 8. "A lecture may be expected."

September 21. Lectures by Mr. I. P. Putnam and O. Everett, Esq.

September 28. Lecture by Oliver Everett, Esq.

October 5. Lecture by William Torrey.

December 20. Lecture and Debate. "Ought the Preaching of the Gospel to be supported by Law?"

January 11, 1833. Debate. "Can a man in health be a temperate drinker of ardent spirits?"

January 25. Lecture by Mr. John Stearns. Subject, "Solar Light;" also a Dissertation by Col. Ivers Phillips.

In February, 1833, as appears by a notice in the *Gazette*, the names of the officers were, Oliver Everett, President; Wm. Torrey, Vice President; E. W. Reed, Secretary; Dr. C. W. Wilder, Nath'l Wood, Col. Ivers Phillips,

Standing Committee; B. Cook, Asher Green, Dr. O. Abercrombie, Purchasing Committee. These officers were chosen February 2d.

February 22. Lecture on "Comets," by Rufus C. Torrey, and dissertation by Mr. William Torrey.

May 31. "A lecture may be expected."

From the *Fitchburg Gazette*, Feb. 25, 1834.

"The members of the Philosophical Society are directed to assemble at the Academy Hall, on Friday evening, Feb. 28, at 7 o'clock; on which occasion, a lecture will be delivered by Dr. T. R. Boutelle, on the 'Properties and Use of the Atmosphere.' Per Order."

From the *Fitchburg Gazette*, April 22, 1834.

"The members of the Philosophical Society are requested to assemble at the Academy Hall, on Friday evening next, at 7 ¼ o'clock. The exercises will consist of a lecture by Capt. Zachariah Sheldon, and a debate on the question, 'whether the difference in the development of the intellectual powers of the sexes, is to be attributed to nature or education.' A punctual attendance is requested by the Standing Committee."

From the *Fitchburg Gazette*, July 22, 1833.

"The members of the Philosophical Society will assemble at the Academy Hall, on Friday evening next, at 7 ½ o'clock. Lecture by Mr. R. C. Torrey. Subject, 'The completion of the Bunker Hill Monument.' A debate will follow on the principles of 'Phrenology.' Per Order."

Sometime in 1834 or 1835, Martin S. Newton, then a student at Harvard College, delivered a lecture on "Ghosts and Hobgoblins," to an interested audience.

From the *Worcester County Courier*, Nov. 18, 1836.

"The Fitchburg Philosophical Society will hold a meeting this evening at the Brick Chapel, at 6 o'clock. A punctual attendance is requested."

A correspondent, over the signature of "Cosmopolite," says in a three-quarter column in the *Worcester County Courier*, of Dec. 9, 1837:

"In this town there are two book-stores, a public library of considerable extent, several private ones, and a family newspaper; and, lastly, though not least, a Philosophical Society. But what transpires before this Society? some will inquire. So much has been written in reference to, and in praise of similar institutions, that, let the reply to such inquiries be,—'Come and see!'"

In the first Fitchburg Directory, published May 1st, 1835, we find the following in the list of societies:

"PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.—Jonas A. Marshall, President; Thos. R. Boutelle, Vice President; Otis Abercrombie, Treasurer and Librarian; Ivers Phillips, Geo. W. Farnum, Henry M. Wilder, Standing Committee; Abel Fox, Ivers Phillips, Thos. C. Caldwell, Purchasing Committee; Rufus C. Torrey, Secretary."

And in the list of libraries, the following:

FITCHBURG PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY. Number of volumes, (including Rees' Cyclopædia) 150. Otis Abercrombie, Librarian.

But the library, the lectures, the essays and the debates of the Philosophical Society were not the only literary food to be found in Fitchburg. There were also two circulating libraries; and, from the *Fitchburg Gazette* and *Worcester County Courier* we are able to obtain a certain amount of information regarding them.

In the first number of the *Fitchburg Gazette*, the first newspaper published in Fitchburg, issued October 19, 1830, we find the following:

"NOTICE.

"Clark Adams will much oblige the Librarian of the Fitchburg Circulating Library, by returning a book entitled the *Naval Temple*, and paying the charges from the 21st of July, 1830. WILSON BAXTER."

Wilson Baxter was a tailor, who, in the same paper, announced the receipt of the "Fall Fashions," and his readiness to do any work intrusted to his care, with neatness and dispatch.

From the *Fitchburg Gazette*, Sept., 1831.

"CIRCULATING LIBRARY.

The subscriber offers for the entertainment of the reading portion of the community some hundred or two volumes of the latest published works of the best authors; among which are the Family Library, published by J. & J. Harper, New York, 22 volumes of which have been issued. Bulwer's, Irving's, Cooper's, and many other valuable, *fashionable* and interesting works.

He has also made arrangements to be supplied with all the most popular new books, as soon as they are issued from the press.

Terms of letting: 6 cents a volume per week. WHITCOMB & COOK."



From the *Fitchburg Gazette*, Sept. 20, 1831.

"NEW BOOKS.—Just received, at the Fitchburg Circulating Library, the latest Nos. of the Family Library, from 17 to 24, containing the History of the Bible, of Chivalry and the Crusades, of Painters and Sculptors, of Egypt and Poland. Also, 8 vols. of the Library of Select Novels, Pelham, The Disowned, Sketches of Irish Character, Southman, Brybent de Conce, Sketches of Real Life, etc., etc."

In the *Fitchburg Gazette*, Dec. 13, 1831, Whitcomb & Cook advertise their book-store and bindery.

"They would also particularly call the attention of the reading class of the community to their Circulating Library, which is daily receiving additions of the most popular Standard and Fashionable publications."

From the *Fitchburg Gazette*, May 2, 1832.

"Just received at the Fitchburg Circulating Library: Castle Dangerous, and Count Robert of Paris, Scott's last novel."

From the *Fitchburg Gazette*, Aug. 14, 1832.

"NEW BOOKS.—For the F. C. Library, Nos. 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35 and 36 of the Family Library.

Also for sale; a new supply of Walter Brown's and Peter Parley's Geography, Lee's Spelling Book, Gould's Latin Grammar, Latin and Greek Reader, Blake's Philosophy and Chemistry. Toy Books of various sizes, prices, etc.

B. COOK."

From the *Fitchburg Gazette*, April 17, 1833.

"FITCHBURG CIRCULATING LIBRARY.

The subscriber would again call the attention of the reading portion of the citizens of this town and vicinity to this Library. It now contains nearly four hundred volumes, consisting of the most approved novels of Scott, Bulwer, Cooper and others, Family Library, Byron's Works, and numerous miscellaneous works, etc. *Terms*.—Subscriptions for a year, \$3; 6 months, \$1.75; three months, \$1; with the privilege of changing the books as often as they please; those who are not subscribers to pay 6¼ cents for each volume per week. Books lost or injured must be paid for.

B. COOK."

From the *Worcester County Courier*, June 28, 1836.

"CIRCULATING LIBRARY.

JUST RECEIVED.—Stories of the Sea, History of Virginia, The Gipsy, 2 volumes; Linwoods, 2 volumes; One in a Thousand, The Old Outlaw, 2 volumes; Japhet in Search of a Father, Rienzi, Matthias and his Impositions, Nullifications, Channing on Slavery, Scottish Chiefs, 3 volumes; Memoirs of Evarts, Weisner and Cornelius; do. Rev. J. Townsend.

W. S. WILDER, Librarian."

From the *Worcester County Courier*, July 21, 1837.

"PARTICULAR NOTICE.—All persons having books in their possession belonging to the Franklin Library are requested to return them forthwith.

W. S. WILDER."

There was still another circulating library in Fitchburg, in addition to that of Messrs. Cook and Wilder, as appears by the following notice in the *Fitchburg Gazette* of Nov. 16, 1833:

"BOOKS AT AUCTION.

The subscriber will sell at Public Auction, on Saturday, the 25th inst., at 6 o'clock, P. M., about 200 volumes of miscellaneous Books; being nearly the entire Circulating Library formerly kept by him. The Library contains the best and latest novels; among which, are Scott's, Cooper's, etc., etc. Also 26 vols. of the most distinguished political Newspapers, published about and during the late war.

ISAAC CUSHING.

Fitchburg, Nov. 12, 1833.

N. B. The above sale will be holden at S. C. Pratt's Hotel, to commence at 6 o'clock, P. M.

IVERS PHILLIPS, Auct'r."

In the Fitchburg Directory of 1835, we find the following notices of libraries, in addition to that of the Philosophical Society, previously mentioned:

"JUVENILE (SABBATH SCHOOL) LIBRARY of the 1st Parish. No. of volumes 300. Francis Perkins, Librarian.

"SABBATH SCHOOL LIBRARY of the 2d Parish. No. of volumes, 400. John T. Farwell, Librarian.

"SABBATH SCHOOL SOCIETY of the Baptist Society. No. of volumes, 250. Lorin Davis, Librarian.

"There is a small Library attached to the Female Reading Society; also with the Maternal Association.

"FITCHBURG CIRCULATING LIBRARY. No. of volumes, 200. Wm. S. Wilder, Librarian."

The officers of the Female Reading Society mentioned above, were at that time, Miss Martha Brown, Miss Betsey Merriam, Miss Sophronia Burrage, Directresses; Miss Lucina Patch, Secretary; Miss Hannah Dole, Treasurer and Librarian.

You have now a skeleton of the history of the Philosophical Society and its library, and of the circulating

library of Messrs. Cook and Wilder to the year 1838, at which time the Philosophical Society must have retired from the useful field which it had occupied, and transferred its library to the Fitchburg Library Association. It was placed in the book-store of Phinehas A. Crocker, in a one-story wooden building, on the present site of Stiles' block. Mr. Crocker's book store, with the two cases of books—containing about 500 volumes—was in a front room; and in the rear room was his book-bindery. A few doors above, on about the location of the present driveway to the Fitchburg hotel, was the book-store and circulating library of William S. Wilder.

When Mr. Crocker formed a partnership in the bindery business with Mr. E. S. Tyler, in 1836, the following conundrum was placed at the bottom of their advertisement: "Why is a volume of periodicals in numbers, like rogues at large? D'ye give it up? Why, because they ought to be bound."

Picture to yourselves the Fitchburg of sixty years ago, with its scattered dwellings, and its small business centre, then mostly in the vicinity of the upper common. But realize, also, that it was, in some respects, more like a western town of to-day than a New England village of the same size at the present time. There was a stir and bustle, an activity both of mind and muscle, that was typical of the New Englander of nearly a century ago. Into this village put our Philosophical Society, with such a list of members as I have read, and it must have a lasting influence upon the society of the place. An interest must have attached to its lectures and debates such as half a dozen Philosophical Societies would not exert in Fitchburg to-day. Yet those few still living, who were then members, or who attended its meetings, remember very little about it which is definite and reliable. We know that the meeting, when Dr. Jonas Marshall lectured

on Electricity, illustrating it with a battery, was quite interesting; that the lecture of Nathaniel Wood, on Man, while interesting and instructive to the older people, was also very amusing to the younger ones, when he described the similarities between the ourang-outang and man; that the scholars of William Cushing, principal of the academy, illustrated before the society his new method of teaching spelling; which was done by each scholar writing sentences on paper, after which the papers were changed, so that each should correct the exercise of another:—but there is very much that is gone forever, and is not even a memory.

One thing that can well be credited to the Philosophical Society,—and which has proved invaluable to us,—is the lectures which were given before it by Nathaniel Wood, on the history of Fitchburg. In these were contained the facts, gleaned from the older inhabitants of the town, which later made the basis of Torrey's History of Fitchburg; upon which we have ever since depended for our knowledge of our earlier history.

It is well for us to put on record to-day what we know of the Fitchburg Philosophical Society.

## THE FITCHBURG ATHENÆUM.

(1852-1859.)

*A paper read at a meeting of the Society, May 21, 1894.*

BY ATHERTON P. MASON, M. D.

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At our meeting last month Mr. Eben. Bailey gave an interesting account of the Fitchburg Philosophical Society. Of its successor, the Fitchburg Library Association (1838-1852), only very meagre information seems at present attainable, and a history of it cannot be given without further research. The Fitchburg Athenæum followed the Library Association, and forms the subject of this evening's paper.

Thanks to the preservation of manuscripts and documents by Charles Mason, Esq., it is possible to give a tolerably complete history of the Athenæum from its inception to September, 1853; but the subsequent history has been compiled, as accurately and fully as time would permit, from the local newspapers, directories and various other sources.

The first manuscript of interest is the record of a preliminary meeting called by citizens desirous of having a new Library Association formed in town, and reads as follows:

"Agreeably to notice a meeting was held at the Fitchburg Hotel on Saturday evening, December 6, 1851, for the purpose of taking preliminary steps towards the formation of a Lyceum and Library Association.

"Having made choice of William B. Towne for Chairman, and T. B. Choate, Secretary, the meeting was addressed by several gentlemen, all

urging the necessity existing for such an Institution, in a town like Fitchburg.

"It was then voted to choose a committee to take measures to consolidate the Library projected with that of the old Philosophical Society, and one in existence at the South part of the town, and to further the progress of subscriptions for the same and report a plan at some future meeting.

"Voted, that the said committee consist of five and be nominated at large, and the following committee was chosen:—Charles Mason, Rev. C. Woodhouse, Asher Green, William B. Wood, Lewis H. Bradford.

"Voted, that a committee be raised for the purpose of taking into consideration the subject of the formation of a Lyceum and to report at the same meeting of committee on a Library; and that the same committee be instructed to report a Constitution and code of by-laws for a Lyceum. The following gentlemen were then chosen to serve on this committee:—William B. Towne, Dr. O. L. Huntley, Goodwin Wood.

"Voted, that the first committee chosen have full power to report a plan of organization for a Library and also all matters connected therewith.

"Voted, that a committee of three be appointed by the Chair to canvass the town in the matter of subscriptions, and that they each have a section apportioned to them and have power to appoint a sub-committee to act with them.

"Voted, that the vote whereby the two committees were instructed to report on the same evening be reconsidered.

"Voted, that when this meeting adjourn it be to meet at the Town Hall on Thursday evening, December 11th, at 7 o'clock, at which time the committee on a Lyceum be expected to report.

"Voted, that the committee on a Library have authority to call a meeting at such time as they may see fit.

"Voted, that the Secretary have authority to call the next meeting and cause Notices to that effect to be printed and posted and that he be remunerated for any expense connected therewith.

"Voted to adjourn.

T. B. CHOATE, *Secretary.*"

Nothing has yet been found to show that the meeting December 11th, 1851, was held. It is probable that the committee of five took the whole matter in charge. At all events the next news we have of the progress of the proposed new association is in March, 1852. On March 4th

a meeting was held in the old town hall, corner of Main and Circle streets, at which Mr. Mason, in behalf of the committee of five, read a preliminary report. It begins with the announcement that Mr. William B. Wood had secured the names of about 125 persons who had agreed to take, for the most part, one share each of the stock, at five dollars per share. Mr. Samuel Cooper took four shares. The little book, containing the original list of signatures obtained by Mr. Wood, was recently found by Mr. Willis, our president, and has been presented by him to the Fitchburg Historical Society. This book and the partial record of the Fitchburg Philosophical Society, given by the daughters of the late Abel F. Adams, are among our most valuable acquisitions; and it is to be hoped that other records of these library associations may come to light in time, so that we may possess a tolerably complete record of the history of Fitchburg, from a literary point of view.

Returning to the committee's report we find that the Fitchburg Library Association, at a meeting December 27th, 1851, voted to transfer their library to the proposed new association, if formed, on the following terms:—that each member of the Library Association should be entitled to one share in the new association and become a member of it with all the privileges of new subscribers, and that the shares in the new association should be transferable.

The catalogue of the Library Association indicated that there were about 500 volumes in its library, some of which were missing and some in poor condition. Many of the books are spoken of as standard works, and Rees' Cyclopædia is specially noticed. There were, at that time, thirty-three members belonging to the Library Association, so that, upon the terms proposed, the library would practically cost the new association \$165. The committee considered the bargain a fair one and recommended the purchase.

The report then dwelt upon the increased advantages which would accrue from the formation of a new association, gave an outline of the plan of organization, advised that the association be incorporated, recommended a course of lectures each winter, and that endeavors should be made to increase the list of subscribers, steps taken to secure suitable rooms, and a meeting held in the near future to perfect the organization.

After the reading of the report the plan was favorably commented upon by Revs. E. W. Bullard and Horatio Stebbins, Dr. Charles Robinson and others; while Rev. Elnathan Davis and some others were opposed to carrying the plan further, and argued in favor of establishing a free town library, under the law passed the year previous. The report was finally unanimously accepted, and the committee instructed to present a plan of organization at a future meeting, increase the list of subscribers, and try to secure rooms in the new town house which was to be erected during the coming summer.

At the annual town meeting, April 5th, 1852, the citizens voted "that the building committee be authorized to procure or provide a room for the Library Association in the new Town House."

One of the first things attended to was the examination of the library of the Fitchburg Library Association. Eighty volumes were found to be missing, and a circular, dated June 13th, 1852, was sent to each person known to have been a member at any time during the preceding ten years, stating the number of books missing, requesting careful search and the return of any book found that belonged to the Association. Some twenty-three volumes appear to have been returned in response to this circular.

In other respects the organization progressed favorably. The Library Association voted to transfer its library, each member taking, in exchange, one share of stock in the new



association. A set of by-laws was drawn up and later (November 5th, 1852), printed in full in the *Sentinel*. These by-laws provided that the association should be called the Fitchburg Athenæum, and any person might become a member, and entitled to one share of stock, by signing the by-laws and paying into the treasury the sum of five dollars. Members of the Fitchburg Library Association were entitled to membership and one share of stock without payment of any admission fee, provided they claimed the right of membership and signed the by-laws prior to September 1st, 1853. Each member was to pay one dollar annually on each share held by him. The officers were to be a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and seven Directors, to be chosen by ballot at the annual meeting, which was appointed to be held on the second Tuesday of September. The balance of the by-laws had to do with duties of officers, meetings, transfer of shares, and the taking of books from the library.

On Saturday, October 16th, 1852, a meeting of the shareholders was held and it was voted to form a corporation. A committee of eight was appointed to report a plan of organization at an adjourned meeting to be held the following Tuesday; and on Tuesday, October 19th, 1852, the By-laws were adopted and the Fitchburg Athenæum organized with exactly 100 members. There is no record that it was ever incorporated.

At this meeting the following were chosen to serve as the first Board of Officers of the Athenæum:—

President, Ebenezer Torrey.

Vice President, Charles H. B. Snow.

Secretary, Dr. Thomas S. Blood.

Treasurer, Lewis H. Bradford.

Directors:—Charles Mason, Goldsmith F. Bailey, Moses Wood, Rev. Horatio Stebbins, James B. Lane, Rev. John Jennings and Dr. Alfred Hitchcock.

A room corresponding closely to the space now occupied by the offices of the mayor and city auditor, was provided and fitted up for the library of the Athenæum in the town house, which was then not quite finished; but, owing to a mistake on the part of New York booksellers, the books ordered to be bought there for the Athenæum were not purchased, and it was not until the early summer of 1853, that any considerable addition was made to the library acquired from the Fitchburg Library Association. The new books were finally bought in Boston, mostly through the firm of Crosby, Nichols & Co. A list of the larger portion of them is still in Mr. Mason's possession.

The main interest, during the autumn of 1852, seemed to centre in the lecture course for the coming winter. The committee on lectures consisted of Charles Mason, Rev. Horatio Stebbins and Rev. John Jennings; and no pains were spared to secure an able and popular course of lectures. Mr. Mason conducted the correspondence and made arrangements with the lecturers, and has preserved the letters received from them and also letters from others who were unable to accept an invitation to appear before a Fitchburg audience that season, but most of whom lectured before the Athenæum in subsequent courses. They were all men of note and their autographs are well worth preserving.

In the *Sentinel* of December 17th, 1852, appeared the following notice:—

"FITCHBURG ATHENÆUM LECTURES.

A course of *twelve* lectures will be delivered before the Fitchburg Athenæum the coming winter. The introductory lecture will be by the Rev. Mark Hopkins, D. D., President of Williams College, on Tuesday, Dec. 21st, at the Meeting House of the Calvinistic Congregational Society. The exercises on the Tuesday evening succeeding will be a *POEM*, by the Rev. John Pierpont of Medford."

The announcement then went on to state that the list had not yet been completed, and mentioned the names of

five prominent lecturers with whom dates had already been arranged.

Tickets for the course were put at a price that at the present time would be regarded as very low, viz:—one dollar for gentlemen and fifty cents for ladies; while the admission fee to single lectures was fifteen cents for gentlemen and ten cents for ladies and minors. This scale of prices was rendered possible by the very moderate fee asked by the eminent lecturers—being uniformly \$20 and expenses. However, the people appreciated the earnest labor of the lecture committee and made the venture a profitable one for the Athenæum; for we find, in a pass-book kept by Mr. Mason, containing the financial account of the lecture course, that there were sold 299 one dollar tickets, 425 fifty cent, 498 fifteen cent and 445 ten cent tickets.

The following is a list of lecturers and the dates on which they appeared before the Athenæum audiences during the winter of 1852-3:—

Rev. Mark Hopkins, D. D., Williamstown,	Dec. 21, 1852.
Rev. John Pierpont, Medford,	" 28, "
Hon. Josiah Quincy, Jr., Boston,	Jan. 4, 1853.
Hon. Horace Greeley, New York, (lecture)	} " 11, "
Charles Thurber, Esq., Worcester, (poem)	
Rev. William Mountford, Gloucester,	" 18, "
Richard H. Dana, Jr., Esq., Boston,	" 25, "
Edwin P. Whipple, Esq., Boston,	Feb. 1, "
Rev. Theodore Parker, Boston,	" 8, "
Oliver Wendell Holmes, M. D., Boston,	" 15, "
Hon. John J. Gilchrist, Charlestown, N. H.,	" 23, "
Hon. John G. Palfrey, Cambridge,	Mar. 1, "
Rev. Samuel Osgood, New York,	" 8, "

The first three lectures were given in the Calvinistic Congregational church, but the remainder were delivered in our present city hall, as is shown by the following extract from the *Sentinel* of January 7th, 1853:—

"ATHENÆUM LECTURES. The remaining nine lectures of the course will be in the New Town Hall, which will be first used for that purpose on Tuesday evening, January 11th. A lecture will then be delivered by the HON. HORACE GREELEY, of the New York *Tribune*, and a POEM by CHARLES THURBER, ESQ., of Worcester. We anticipate seeing the elegant and spacious hall filled with an audience of the intelligent citizens of the neighboring towns, as well as of our own, to enjoy the rich intellectual treat which may be expected on the occasion."

These sanguine expectations were fully realized, for the audience, that evening, was the largest of any during the course, numbering about 950.

For some reason Mr. Torrey appears to have resigned his office as President of the Athenæum, and Charles Mason was chosen to fill that office for the rest of the year. The date of this change is uncertain, but it was previous to July 1st, 1853.

The certificates of stock in the Athenæum (of which I have brought No. 1 for inspection this evening) were not issued until July 1st, 1853, and Mr. Mason signed the first 98 of them as president. This fact was obtained from a certificate-book of the Fitchburg Athenæum now in the Public Library. It contains duplicates of all certificates issued, and these number 215; while a book containing the original by-laws, as written by Dr. Blood, the Secretary, also in the Public Library, has only 202 signatures in it, showing that 13 members had certificates issued to them without signing the by-laws. These two books are the only ones in the library containing original records of the Athenæum. It is remarkable that the record book, which, above all else, should have been turned over to the town in 1859, is missing.

The first annual meeting was held at the library room, September 13th, 1853, at which time the annual report of the Board of Directors was presented. This report was printed in full in the local newspapers, a practice which, un-

fortunately, was not continued in subsequent years. It gave a very complete and satisfactory showing of the work of the Athenæum during the eleven months since its organization. The following is the statement of the result of the lecture course of 1852-53:—

“The average attendance upon the lectures was about 750; the largest number present at any one time was probably 950, which was on the evening of the first lecture in the new Town Hall. About 725 tickets were sold for the whole course, and about 950, in all, for single evenings. The gross proceeds of the lectures amounted to \$630.69, the expenses of the course to \$411.25, leaving a surplus of \$219.44 to be applied to the uses of the Library.”

It is further stated that seventy-eight new members had been added during the eleven months, bringing \$390 into the treasury, and making the gross receipts over \$1000. About \$550 were expended for new books, and about \$130 for furniture, book-cases, record book, etc., and the balance in the treasury was \$31.52. 550 new books had been purchased and 45 donated, which, with the 435 volumes acquired from the Fitchburg Library Association, made a total of over 1000 volumes, which, forty years ago, might well be considered a very good sized library.

At this meeting the following board of officers was chosen for the year 1853-54:—

President, Goldsmith F. Bailey.

Vice-President, Charles H. B. Snow.

Secretary, Dr. Thomas S. Blood.

Treasurer, Lewis H. Bradford.

Directors:—Rev. Horatio Stebbins, J. B. Lane, Charles Mason, Nathaniel Wood, Moses Wood, E. G. Lucas and Stephen Shepley.

The supply of facts from which to compile the history of the Athenæum during the rest of its existence, is very limited. In the *Sentinel* of November 4th, 1853, it is announced that the second course of lectures would begin

about the middle of the month, and that the list of lecturers included Timothy Bigelow, John G. Saxe, Wendell Phillips, Madam Lesdernier, John Pierpont, Dr. Holmes, Rev. T. Starr King, Robert C. Winthrop, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Rev. Samuel Osgood and E. P. Whipple.

As the Athenæum made no announcement of each lecture in advance, in the local papers, during the winter of 1853-54, and the papers took no pains to give a review of the lectures from week to week, scarcely any information can be gained about the lectures from the newspapers. From another source, therefore, is obtained the following complete, and undoubtedly correct, list of lecturers, with dates on which they appeared before the Fitchburg Athenæum in 1853-54:—

Timothy Bigelow, Boston,	Nov. 22, 1853.
John G. Saxe, Burlington, Vt.,	" 29, "
Wendell Phillips, Boston,	Dec. 6, "
Madame E. P. Lesdernier,	" 13, "
Rev. John Pierpont, Medford,	" 20, "
Oliver Wendell Holmes, M. D., Boston,	" 27, "
Rev. T. Starr King, Boston,	Jan. 3, 1854.
Rev. R. H. Neale, Boston,	" 10, "
Elihu Burritt,	" 17, "
Rev. F. H. Hedge, D. D., Cambridge,	" 24, "
Edwin P. Whipple, Boston,	" 31, "
George Sumner, Boston,	Feb. 10, "

There was also given this season a supplementary course consisting of three lectures by Rev. Horatio Stebbins, February 14, 21 and 28; and one lecture by Rev. G. B. Wilcox, March 7, 1854. The lectures given by Mr. Stebbins were on Benedict Arnold, and the price of tickets for the three was 25 cents for gentlemen and 12½ cents for ladies and minors; while to the lecture given by Mr. Wilcox, there was but one price, viz. 10 cents.

From a memorandum kept by Mr. Mason we learn

that the financial result of the second course of lectures, including the supplementary course, was as follows:—

Receipts from the course of 12 lectures,	\$514.47
“ “ 3 lectures by Mr. Stebbins,	73.23
“ “ lecture by Mr. Wilcox,	12.40
Total receipts,	\$600.10
Total expenses of the course,	429.58
Surplus,	\$170.52

About February, 1854, a catalogue of the books in the Athenæum library was printed by E. & J. F. D. Garfield.

At the annual meeting in September, 1854, the following were elected officers for the year ensuing:—

President, Goldsmith F. Bailey.

Vice-President, Charles H. B. Snow.

Secretary, E. Foster Bailey.

Treasurer, Stephen Shepley.

Directors:—Rev. Horatio Stebbins, Dr. Alfred Hitchcock, David H. Merriam, J. B. Lane, M. G. Lyon, Dr. Jabez Fisher and Edwin Upton.

The next mention of the Athenæum in the local papers is an advertisement in the *Sentinel* of Nov. 3d, 1854, stating that the third course of lectures would begin November 16th, and giving a partial list of the lecturers. The price of tickets was the same as for the two previous courses.

The complete list of lecturers, with dates, in the third course, during the winter of 1854-55, is as follows:—

Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, Brooklyn, N. Y.,	Nov. 16, 1854.
Rev. Thomas Starr King, Boston,	“ 21, “
Rev. Edward E. Hale, Worcester,	“ 28, “
Rev. Edward Hitchcock, Amherst,	Dec. 12, “
Hon. John P. Hale, New York, N. Y.,	“ 19, “
Rev. John Pierpont, Medford,	“ 28, “
Prof. Roswell D. Hitchcock of Bowdoin College,	Jan. 9, 1855.
Ralph Waldo Emerson, Concord,	“ 16, “
Richard H. Dana, Jr., Boston,	“ 23, “

Rev. E. Cutler, St. Albans, Vt.,	Jan. 30, 1855.
Rev. Daniel C. Eddy, Speaker Mass. H. of Reps.,	Feb. 6, “
Rev. A. L. Stone, Boston,	“ 12, “

The last lecture of the course was to have been given by Hon. Rufus Choate, but he was unable to be here on account of illness.

In a memorandum kept by Mr. Mason it appears that the receipts from the third course of lectures amounted to \$540.70, and the expenses to about \$500, leaving a surplus of only about \$40.

The annual meeting in 1855 was advertised to be held September 4th, but no quorum being present, it was adjourned to September 7th, at which time officers were chosen, with the exception of two of the Board of Directors. In the Fitchburg Directory for 1856 the officers of the Athenæum for 1855-56 are given as follows:—

President, Hon. Moses Wood.

Vice-President, Charles H. B. Snow.

Secretary and Librarian, E. Foster Bailey.

Treasurer, Stephen Shepley.

Directors:—J. B. Lane, Dr. Alfred Hitchcock, M. G. Lyon, Charles Mason, Dr. Jabez Fisher, Benj. Snow, Jr., and Alfred R. Ordway.

At that time there were about 140 members, and the library contained 1200 volumes. The library was open for the delivery of books on Tuesdays from 2 to 5 P. M., and on Saturdays from 2 to 5, and 7 to 8 P. M. Two volumes could be taken at a time.

The fourth annual course of lectures began on November 13th, 1855. The complete list is as follows:—

Rev. F. D. Huntington, D. D., New York,	Nov. 13, 1855.
Rev. R. H. Neale, D. D., Boston,	“ 20, “
Bayard Taylor, New York,	“ 29, “
Rev. A. A. Miner, Boston,	Dec. 4, “
Rev. G. W. Bethune, D. D., New York,	“ 11, “



Rev. T. L. Cuyler, D. D., New York,	Dec. 18, 1855.
Rev. Mark Hopkins, D. D., Williamstown,	" 25, "
Mrs. — Webb, (colored)	Jan. 4, 1856.
Rev. Henry W. Bellows, D. D., New York,	" 22, "
Rev. A. L. Stone, Boston,	Feb. 11, "
Wendell Phillips, Boston,	" 21, "
Rev. E. H. Chapin, D. D., New York,	" 26, "

The receipts from the sale of tickets for this course were \$532.19, and the expenses were \$558.73, leaving the Athenæum a deficit of \$26.54 to pay out of its treasury.

March 7th, 1856, new by-laws were adopted, the chief change being that the annual meeting was to be held on the second Tuesday in May, instead of September. Accordingly the annual meeting in 1856 was held May 13th, at which time the following officers were elected for the ensuing year:—

President, Thornton K. Ware.

Vice-President, William B. Wood.

Secretary and Librarian, E. Foster Bailey.

Treasurer, Stephen Shepley.

Directors:—Charles Mason, Rev. William P. Tilden, James B. Lane, Thomas C. Caldwell, Eli A. Hubbard, Benjamin Snow, Jr., and Moses G. Lyon.

No mention of the Athenæum is to be found in the local papers, or elsewhere, from May, 1856, until December, 1856, when the Fitchburg Almanac and Directory for 1857 was issued. In this we find quite a lengthy notice of the Athenæum and its work. After setting forth the objects of the association, it is stated that there are over 150 members and that the library contains upwards of 1400 volumes. The lecture courses are next spoken of and the list of lecturers in the first course is given in full, with the financial result. It then goes on as follows:—"Neither of the three subsequent courses of lectures has yielded so large an amount of receipts, while the expenses of the course, from

year to year, have been constantly and materially increasing. The receipts of the last course (1855-6), were insufficient to defray the expenses."

"The Directors for the present year have nevertheless determined to try the experiment of another course—deeming it a matter of importance to the public that there should be some way like this, at once pleasant and profitable, of spending one evening in a week during the winter season. Being, however, unwilling either to subject the institution to loss from this course, or to employ lecturers of an inferior order, or to raise the price of tickets, they have decided, for this season, to reduce the number of lectures—having but ten instead of twelve as heretofore."

There were, however, apparently but nine lectures given in the course for 1856-57. Parke Godwin of New York, who was to lecture Jan. 20th, 1857, failed to be here on that date. He was later engaged to lecture here on March 3d, but again disappointed the Athenæum without sending any notice or excuse. There is nothing to indicate that any further attempt was made to have the tenth lecture.

The list of lecturers, with dates, in the 1856-57 course is as follows:—

Rev. Henry W. Bellows, D. D., New York,	Dec. 2, 1856.
Rev. Thomas M. Clark, D. D., Providence, R. I.,	" 9, "
Rev. Daniel C. Eddy, Lowell,	" 16. "
Rev. Thomas Starr King, Boston,	" 23, "
Ralph Waldo Emerson, Concord,	" 30, "
Hon. Thomas Russell, Boston,	Jan. 6, 1857.
Wendell Phillips, Boston,	" 13, "
Rev. George E. Ellis, Charlestown,	" 27, "
Henry D. Thoreau, Concord,	Feb. 3, "

No record of the financial result of this course has been found.

At the annual meeting, May 12th, 1857, the following officers were chosen:—

President, Eli A. Hubbard.

Vice-President, Stephen Shepley.

Secretary, Daniel Stearns.

Treasurer, Charles W. Wilder.

Directors:—Benjamin Snow, Jr., Rev. William P. Tilden, Charles Mason, Rev. Elnathan Davis, Moses G. Lyon, Dr. Thomas R. Boutelle and Rev. Kendall Brooks.

The membership at this time was about 160, and there were about 1500 volumes in the library.

At a meeting of the directors, held October 26th, 1857, to consider the matter of having a course of lectures during the coming winter, it was decided that, "in view of the bad state of the times, it was best to give up the course altogether." There were, however, some lectures given during the winter, after all.

Mr. Hubbard, who had been the principal of our high school since 1854, left Fitchburg and went to Easthampton at the close of 1857, and some time in November or December of that year, resigned his office as president of the Athenæum. Rev. Kendall Brooks was chosen to fill the vacancy.

In the *Sentinel* of December 4th, 1857, is the following witticism, taken from the *Clinton Courant*:—

"The *Fitchburg Reveille* complains that the usual Lyceum Lectures in that town are to be discontinued this season on account of hard times. Pretty story, that, for a town that returned, at the last census, over six thousand inhabitants! Do as we do, neighbor; get up some home productions and not look for big guns. If, with your score or two of educated men, you can't make up a list, we'll send you some spare hands. Don't make such a fuss about being the shire town of a new county, unless you have brains enough for twelve good lectures."

The editor of the *Sentinel* makes the following comment on the above:—

"Our friend of the *Courant* will see, from a slip in another column, that his views singularly correspond with those of our lecture committee."

In the "slip in another column" referred to, it is stated

that the lecture committee had decided to have a series of lectures, most of them by residents of Fitchburg and vicinity, and free to the public. There were to be at least three lectures by gentlemen from out of town, and to these there would be a small admittance fee.

The first of these lectures was by George William Curtis of New York, December 10th, 1857. Admission ten cents. It was not a success financially, as there were only about 300 people present—enough to pay a little over one-half the expenses.

Hon. J. W. Mansur gave the first free lecture at the town hall on December 22d, 1857, and the late George E. Towne the second on January 5th, 1858. Both these lectures were attended by very large audiences.

On January 12th, 1858, Rev. William R. Alger, of Boston, lectured, the admission fee being ten cents. Only a little over 200 people were present—not enough to pay half the expenses. It was announced, on that evening, that Rev. William P. Tilden would give a free lecture a week later; but, the next day, the lecture committee, seeing that the citizens failed to patronize the lectures to which a very modest admission fee was required and crowded in to the free ones, a course which would ruin the Athenæum financially, if pursued, decided to have no more free lectures; so Mr. Tilden did not lecture on January 19th, as announced.

The lecture committee must have soon reconsidered their action, for Mr. Tilden gave a lecture free to the public on February 2d, 1858, and other free lectures were given as follows:—

Rev. James Thurston of Lunenburg,	Feb. 9, 1858.
Rev. B. G. Northrop of Saxonville,	" 16, "
Rev. Kendall Brooks of Fitchburg,	" 23, "
Rev. Albert W. Bruce of Fitchburg,	Mar. 2, "

On March 16th, 1858, Wendell Phillips lectured before the Athenæum. Admission, fifteen cents for gentlemen, and

ten cents for ladies. There was a very good sized audience and the receipts were probably sufficient to pay expenses.

At the annual meeting, May 11th, 1858, the following officers were chosen:—

President, Rev. Kendall Brooks.

Vice-President, Stephen Shepley.

Secretary, Daniel Stearns.

Treasurer, Charles W. Wilder.

Directors:—Charles Mason, Benjamin Snow, Jr., Rev. W. P. Tilden, M. G. Lyon, Dr. T. R. Boutelle, Dr. Jonas A. Marshall and Hanson L. Read.

So far as is now known, no attempt was made to have a course of lectures during the winter of 1858-59. The enthusiasm of the members of the Athenæum appeared to be fast ebbing away, and evidently a portion of the members shared in the sentiment of the townspeople, which was becoming strongly in favor of the establishment of a public library in Fitchburg. On March 24th, 1859, a short time before the annual town meeting, a special meeting of the shareholders of the Athenæum was held to consider the expediency of giving their library (consisting then of about 1600 volumes) to the town, provided the citizens voted, at the coming town meeting, to appropriate the sum allowed by law (\$1831.00 in the case of Fitchburg) for the establishment of a free town library. At this special meeting the matter was freely and thoroughly discussed. Nathaniel Wood and Dr. Jabez Fisher were the principal speakers in favor of giving the library to the town. It was, however, decided in the negative by a vote of 25 to 14.

At town meeting, April 11th, 1859, it was voted to appropriate the amount necessary to establish a public library.

On May 10th, 1859, occurred the annual meeting of the Athenæum shareholders. Rev. William P. Tilden, chairman of the board of directors, read the report for the past

year, showing that 180 volumes had been added to the library, that the receipts had been about \$360, and expenses about \$280.

The main business of the meeting seems to have been to decide what disposition should be made of the library. It was finally voted to instruct the president and treasurer to sell all the property of the Athenæum, aside from the cash in the treasury (about \$70) to the town of Fitchburg for \$400. The meeting was then adjourned to May 24th, at which time officers were to be chosen.

There is no record at present known, showing that this adjourned meeting was held. Presumably the organization soon disbanded.

The town subsequently authorized the purchase of the Athenæum property at the price named above. Several members very generously relinquished their proportion of the sale, to the amount of \$166.84, so that the actual cost of all these books, cases, etc., to the town was less than \$250.

Thus was the Fitchburg Athenæum merged into a larger and more permanent institution. During its six and one-half years' existence it was a potent factor for good in the literary and social life of Fitchburg. Its library was large, considering the population of the town at that time, and the books admirably adapted to the needs of the community; while the courses of lectures given before it were fully equal to those delivered, at the same period, in the large cities of the country. The lecturers were, almost without exception, the foremost in the land, and to-day their names are known and respected throughout the civilized world. In spite of the vaunted superiority of this age over that of a generation ago, it is extremely doubtful whether it would be possible to have to-day a course of lectures that would match those delivered before the Fitchburg Athenæum.

## THE FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW AND ITS WORKINGS.

*Read at a meeting of the Society June 18, 1894.*

BY MRS. MARTHA E. CROCKER, OF LEOMINSTER.

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"Now is the winter of our discontent  
Made glorious summer,"

were the words which fell from the eloquent lips of our great Massachusetts statesman as he stepped out upon the balcony of one of our city hotels at the opening of an address to the people at the North, immediately after the passage of that odious bill, the Fugitive Slave Law. Never were uttered more mistaken words than these, spoken by that powerful and honored senator, Mr. Webster, as the shouts of applause ascended from the assembly below, showing how the people at the North hailed with joy this law, unjust and inhuman as it was, and how ready and eager were they to receive and bow down in obedience to its behests!

This law required citizens of free states to aid in reclaiming and returning to their masters fugitives who escaped from slavery into their jurisdiction, and imposed a penalty of one thousand dollars and imprisonment on every citizen found protecting or aiding them in any way in their escape.

Many people at the North were willing to do anything to please and conciliate the South which would promote their own selfish interests. These people were intent on business and money-making, which was remarkably pros-

perous at that time, and therefore hailed with general joy the announcement that all differences between the diverse sections were now adjusted and settled by the passage of that bill. The terms of that settlement were of no consequence if it only secured to them peace and prosperity; they were in no wise inclined to let the condition and welfare of the colored man interfere with their accumulating gains.

These northern sympathizers were called doughfaces; and later, in secession times, copperheads; they were the bloodhounds of the North, ready to scent, hunt, catch and return fugitives to their masters. To another class—the anti-slavery people of the country, who comprised a large and earnest minority—this law was intensely obnoxious, both in principle and practice. It was drafted in 1851 by Senator Mason of Virginia, who became a prominent rebel leader in the war which followed.

No movement in favor of slavery ever so thoroughly aroused the contempt and scorn of the true and Christian men and women of the North as this unrighteous law forced upon them. Indignation meetings were held in many cities and towns, and a determined resistance to it was manifested. These meetings were often persecuted and treated to rotten eggs, brickbats, etc., by their opponents. Underground railroads were projected and put into operation. Depots and stations were systematically arranged all along the line from Boston to Canada, via Leominster and Fitchburg, to aid fugitives in their escape to a free country, in defiance of law. Joel Smith, Jonathan Drake, and many others in Leominster, were superintendents, and had stations all along the route, while Benjamin Snow and S. S. Crocker of Fitchburg, were in the same business. These men were engineers, conductors, etc., on the road, and stood faithfully at their post as long as there was one fugitive to travel over it.



It was a quiet route. No shrill whistle sounded; no bell was rung to warn of the approaching train; but silently and noiselessly it moved on in the darkness of the night-time, freighted with trembling, oppressed human beings, excluded from God's daylight, which was created for all his creatures, black as well as white. No mistakes by careless, negligent officials were made, and no accidents ever occurred on the road from Boston to Canada. That "glorious summer" which passed in prophetic vision before the great political seer in 1851, never was realized or enjoyed by the people, North or South, till the booming cannon and the whizzing shell had done their terrible and effective work, and thousands of our young men had laid down their lives on the battle-field for peace and liberty.

The older class of our inhabitants will remember the excitement and terrible scenes that followed the execution of this law—the inhuman and cruel deeds that were committed in seizing and returning captured slaves to their masters, and even some who had never been slaves,—all alike were rushed away with a mock trial or none at all, sometimes being denied their own evidence in the case before a commissioner hired for that work.

The needless brutalities with which seizures were often made, tended to intensify the general abhorrence which they occasioned. In repeated instances the first notice the alleged fugitive had of his peril was given by a blow on his head, sometimes with a heavy club, and being thus knocked down, he was carried bleeding and insensible before the commissioner, who made short work of identifying him, and earning ten dollars by remanding him back into slavery. A mulatto waiter at a hotel was knocked down in like manner and partially shackled. He fought them off with the handcuff on his right wrist, and, covered with blood, rushed from the house and plunged into the Susquehanna river, exclaiming, "I will be drowned rather

than be taken alive." He was pursued to the river bank, fired upon several times and severely wounded, but finally escaped. Any number of such inhuman acts occurred during these times, too revolting and terrible to multiply here.

Intense excitement and indignation was felt throughout the country when the arrest of Shadrach, of Sims, and of Anthony Burns was made in Boston. Shadrach escaped, but poor Sims and Burns were tried and doomed to lifelong bondage again. Boston's militia and her orthodox citizens were called out to aid in preventing their escape during the trial. Of course they were only acting in obedience to law, forgetting that when a civil law conflicts with the higher one—the law of God—it shall not be obeyed, but trampled under the feet of men. When the trials were over the victims were marched off with their triumphant masters, by the aid of the good people of the city, to the boat that took them from this boasted land of freedom back to the vile southern domain of slavery.

Shadrach was the first one of the three arrested, and when on trial a large company of colored friends rushed into the court-room, took him out and hustled him into a carriage and drove off to Concord, where he was put aboard the underground railroad, came to Leominster and stopped with Mr. Drake for a while. When there he attended a meeting disguised in woman's clothing, and was not detected. From Leominster he went to Mr. Snow's, at Fitchburg. The following evening a little company of friends had gathered at the home of Mr. Crocker to pay the family a visit. Among them was the venerable and good Deacon L—, a conservative anti-slavery man—like many others in the Baptist church and other churches in Fitchburg at that time, as well as in most all of the religious bodies everywhere—who meekly and piously went for obeying the law. This good deacon had a great deal to say about the majesty of the law. "We must sustain

the majesty of the law," were words always and ever upon his lips. This topic was probably the main theme of conversation during the evening. Late, when the company were about to leave, a carriage drove to the door, and lo and behold! there was Mr. Snow, with the fleeing Shadrach. He was taken into the house by the side door as quietly as possible, but all felt that something unusual and of interest had occurred; and when sufficient promises of secrecy were made by the visitors, the name of the fugitive was announced.

All were acquainted with the circumstances of his arrest and escape. Every one was anxious and earnest to see him, Deacon L— with the rest. After much persuasion and promises of secrecy, the fugitive reluctantly went into the room where the people were. They were all much pleased with his appearance and felt disposed to converse a long time. After the prolonged interview with him, Mr. Crocker said to the friends, "This poor fellow is destitute, it is cold weather, and he is going to Canada to a colder climate. Can't we make up a little purse of money for him?" A hat was passed and every one put into it. Those who had no money with them borrowed of their neighbors, and a nice little sum was given him. But what became of the "majesty of the law" about this time? It vanished, and was forgotten in the presence of justice; it was not potent enough to stand before appealing human suffering and distress. When the visitors left for their homes every blessed one of them had broken the law.

No tale was ever told of that evening's experience by any one. Later on that night Mr. Crocker sent Bolivar Crane, one of his workmen, with his team and Shadrach up to North Ashburnham to the Wards. Mr. Ward was a friend and helper of the fugitives. At his home he was taken sick and remained secreted in his attic for some time. When sufficiently recovered he went on to Canada,

where all such were safe from pursuers who hunted them in the States with dog and gun.

Another instance of the working of that odious law occurred in Fitchburg during these dark times. A family named Williams, consisting of a man, his wife and two daughters, living in Boston, became alarmed, as one colored person after another was seized in the city and sent back South. Mr. Williams had been a slave in Kentucky, and was manumitted a few years before, had free papers, but feared, notwithstanding his papers, for his own safety and that of his family. His wife was formerly a slave in Virginia, and by a very bold and hazardous effort, had escaped with her two little girls and come North. She married Mr. Williams, and they lived industriously and comfortably up to these times. Feeling that it was not safe to live in Boston longer, they came to Fitchburg. A little cabin was fitted up for them on Mr. Crocker's land, where they lived several months, the family all obtaining employment. The two girls worked in the mill. Mrs. Williams was a capable, energetic woman, and found plenty of work to do. Several evening hours every week were devoted to teaching the family, as some of them could not read.

They were all comfortable, contented and happy up to the time of Burns' arrest, when their peace and happiness ended. When the girls first entered the mill to work, it made quite a disturbance among the help. One of the best girls presented herself before one of the proprietors and called for a settlement, saying that she was going to leave. Mr. Crocker asked her reasons, and she replied that she couldn't work with "niggers." He said, "Very well," and paid her off, probably very much to her surprise and disappointment, she thinking, no doubt, that the "niggers" would be discharged and herself retained. The promptness by which her request was responded to was

sufficient for the rest of the employees, who made no further trouble. One of the family was taken ill, and Dr. Pillsbury was called. He asked the old lady what she should do if she heard that slave hunters were in town. She replied: "I should start right quick; I always keep my heels greased," adding, "I would rather go to the bottom of the near mill-pond than to be found by them." The family finally, through fear, left all that was comfortable and pleasant and went with the others to Canada; enduring the cold rigors of that land in order to be where slave-masters and hunters would trouble no more. Ever after the arrest of Burns, until they left, whenever Mr. Williams came about the house and met any one, the poor old man would shake his head and exclaim: "Drefful times, drefful times; oh! drefful times!" Those were about the only words he ever uttered in that time of his distress and trial. Another colored man by the name of Billy Fountain, a friend of theirs from Boston, came and lived with them, and when the family left he went also.

After Shadrach had been in Canada a few months he sent back to Mr. Crocker a little article of Indian work to show that he was alive, and also as a grateful remembrance of the kindness he received in the hour of his need and peril. This little crude souvenir of slavery and fugitive slave law days is still kept in the family. The horse that carried Shadrach and other fleeing fugitives from Fitchburg toward the land of freedom and safety, became quite famous, receiving the soubriquet of "Shadrach," which name he was ever after called, not only in Fitchburg, but also in the city of Lawrence, where his owner afterwards removed. Everybody was interested in the faithful animal that had done such good service in the cause of freedom and humanity.

Our late historian, Bancroft, said: "When the hour strikes for a people or mankind to pass into a new form

of being, unseen hands draw the bolts from the gates of futurity—doors open for the people to enter upon the work of their new state of being, an all-subduing influence prepares the minds of men for the coming revolution. Those who plan resistance find themselves in conflict with the will of Providence, rather than with human desires; and all hearts and understandings, most of all the opinions and influence of the unwilling, are wonderfully attracted and compelled to bear forward the change, which becomes more and more an obedience to the law of universal nature than submission to the arbitraments of men." The hour had struck for the negro slave to pass into a new form of being. Through the thick darkness of slavery's night, Divine Providence had been guiding and controlling events which led towards their emancipation. Public opinion had been changing, the people had been awakened more and more to the great wrong and wickedness of oppression. Providence had been leading them on and up to a higher standard of Christianity, philanthropy and humanity. Enemies and opposers resisted the onward march of revolutionary thought and action, but right and truth moved steadily on. Abraham Lincoln had been raised up for just such times as these, and through the open door of Secession, January 1, 1863, he sent forth to the world his "Proclamation of Emancipation," forever wiping out the blot and stain of American slavery from our country's history.

On that memorable day,—January 1, 1863,—a bell pealed forth in the town of Fitchburg which thrilled the hearts of every lover of liberty. It pealed forth now for the first time for freedom; hitherto it had chimed for slavery on the soil of the South. Many had been waiting long to hear it, but it had kept silent. A citizen had given it to the church with this one stipulation—that its first peal should tell of freedom to the slave.

One can imagine with what proud satisfaction his ear greeted those sounds, rung out in that early morning over the quiet valley and echoed among the hills of old Fitchburg, for from his boyhood his heart had been touched by the wrongs of the slave. He had always been somewhat in advance of public sentiment, and had sometimes met opposition from those who could not see as he saw, till the blood of their sons had been spilled on the soil where the sighs of the slave had gone up to God.

Benjamin Snow, Jr., of Fitchburg, "bid off" this bell at an auction in Boston. It had been captured, with many others, by Gen. Butler from the rebels at New Orleans. They had stripped them from their churches to convert them into munitions of war.

As Mr. Snow intended, it was first rung on the day of the President's "Emancipation Proclamation," and Mr. Snow rung it himself! A little boy in the village, on hearing the first stroke of the bell, rushed, bareheaded and barefooted into the street, clapping his hands and shouting: "Hurrah! Hurrah! The *niggers* are free! The *niggers* are free!"

The words of the poet, singing of the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage, seem fitting for this great event of freedom of the slaves from Southern bondage:—

"Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea,  
Jehovah hath spoken, His people are free!"

# DEDICATION OF THE FITCH MEMORIAL TABLET,

AT ASHBY,

WEDNESDAY, JULY 4TH, 1894.

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Under the auspices of the Fitchburg Historical Society, dedicatory exercises were held at Ashby, July 4th. There was a large attendance of Ashby citizens, and a good delegation was present from Fitchburg, including about one-half of the members of the society.

The exercises began soon after 3 P. M., with an introductory address by Henry A. Willis, Esq., president of the society.

## PRESIDENT WILLIS'S ADDRESS.

*Friends:*—We meet, to-day, on historic ground and amid historic memories. Filled with the inspiration which this day of all others brings to the heart of every true American, we have left the scenes of boisterous enthusiasm and have come into this peaceful valley to spend a quiet hour in honoring the memory of one of the old pioneers in the civilization of this portion of the state.

The anniversary of our country's birth falls but one day short of the anniversary of a tragic event which occurred on this spot one hundred and forty-six years ago. Here was the scene of a merciless attack by a band of savage Indians and the heroic defense of a home.

The details of this story the orator of the day will probably rehearse to you, and I will not presume to trespass upon his ground.

But permit me to say that John Fitch,—living here, miles away from any other white settler, in a rudely fortified dwelling, his only garrison being his young family and two or three soldiers, sent him by the Governor of the Province, standing guard as it were at the portal of civil-



ization,—was a hero, and as such we honor him. So did his fellow citizens honor him, and when, a few years later, it was determined to create a new town out of the too expansive territory of Lunenburg, he it was who was selected to secure the act of incorporation, and his name the one by which to designate the new municipality of Fitchburg.

In every age and among all people, it has ever been the custom to commemorate good and brave deeds in song and story and monumental stone and brass. So too, at rather a late day, it has been deemed fit and proper to thus commemorate the deeds and honor the memory of this sturdy old pioneer.

The project of a monument originated with the Fitchburg Historical Society about two years ago, and the city government generously appropriated the funds for the purpose. A joint committee of the city council and Historical Society have carried on the work to what seems to be an appropriate result.

The completed monument, unpretentious in size but of enduring material, stands before us.

The town of Ashby will take it to its perpetual care and keeping, and we are here to pronounce some formal words of dedication.

To the simple services of the hour I bid you cordial welcome.

The invocation was then made by Rev. George M. Bodge, of Leominster.

Keller's "American Hymn" was next rendered by the combined choirs of the Ashby churches in a very effective manner, after which the Hon. Edgar S. Moulton, Mayor of Fitchburg, presented the tablet to the Town of Ashby.

#### MAYOR MOULTON'S ADDRESS.

The Declaration of American Independence adopted by the Continental Congress, at the state house, Philadelphia, July 4th, 1776, stands, to-day, the charter of our American liberty.

It was the first grand step of American freedom and progress in the march across this continent, whose influence now binds together a nation extending from the Lakes to Mexico, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific. It was the death knell of England's power over her American colonies, and severed the ties that bound them to contribute to her support without a voice in their own government.

At this distance from the occurrences of the day, when the enthusiastic and just indignation that prompted this immortal state paper has

passed away, the allegations against King George and his ministers have, to a certain degree, lost much of their interest. At this period, when all nations have learned to respect us, and we count England among our best friends, the bitterness of these charges against her has, in our minds, faded away.

In the bosoms of the revolutionary fathers, however, they created a fervor of patriotism stronger than the love of life and property, and in defense of their principles these men took up arms, defied tyranny, fought, bled and died. With them, the issue was simply liberty or death. Nowhere is this sentiment more forcefully expressed than in the closing sentences of the Declaration itself:

"With a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other, our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor."

It was no empty boast. They went forth to battle for their rights with such earnestness that they won the prize for which they fought, and the American Republic, born of patriotism and of strife, won victory and peace for succeeding generations.

The great principle established by the triumph of the American colonies was this: the equality of all men under the law, possessing the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, as one common heritage. And these rights and privileges are our heritage today.

To-day we venerate their memory; and if from their spirit homes they are permitted to witness our happiness and the blessings they purchased for us in those rugged times and dark days, I am sure they must rejoice with us in the triumph of the principles they established and in behalf of which they laid down their lives by the wayside and on the battle-field. Let us never forget these men, nor those noble mothers, wives and daughters of the Revolution.

The lessons which the lives and deaths of these brave and noble men and women bequeathed to us, are worthy of our consideration.

They were men of simple habits, living lives of industry in their several vocations, and overcoming difficulties by their energy and perseverance. They were men of integrity and honor, knowing and doing their duty as citizens in all the relations of life. They possessed no false ambition to become rich by speculation and fraud, nor did they encourage hurtful extravagance. They respected the laws of the government under which they lived, until those laws became unjustly oppressive and destructive to the best interests of the entire colonies. They encouraged morality and truth in their dealings with each other, and also towards strangers with whom they came in contact.

Such were the men and women in the times that tried their souls. And such a man was John Fitch, the memory of whom we honor to-day by dedicating to his memory this monument, which was caused to be erected by the efforts of the Fitchburg Historical Society.

The first public notice that we have of John Fitch is in 1748, when he was taken in captivity and carried to Canada by the Indians. He lived near this location, and at that time this territory, as well as the city of Fitchburg, was included in the town of Lunenburg. After being taken to Canada, he was released by a general exchange of prisoners, and returned to this location. In 1757 we read of his attempt to have a portion of Lunenburg set off as a new town, and Feb. 3, 1764, the request was granted by the general court, and the new town was named Fitchburg in honor of John Fitch, who was foremost in all things which were a benefit to the town in which he lived.

I will not attempt to go into the details of the history of the life of this honored man, but will leave that to the honorable gentleman who will next address you.

And now, sir, it affords me great pleasure, in behalf of the city of Fitchburg, to present to the town of Ashby, through you, its representative, this beautiful monument. Guard it zealously, care for it tenderly, that it may ever stand to the memory of a brave man, and an honor to our city and your town.

Horace S. Brooks, Esq., a member of the Board of Selectmen of Ashby, accepted the Tablet, in behalf of the town, in the following words:—

**MR. BROOKS' ADDRESS.**

*Mr. Chairman, President and Members of the Fitchburg Historical Society:*—It seems, on this occasion, as though you had turned backward the wheel of Time and shown us the scenes that were cut upon its great rim a century and a quarter ago. They are not foreign scenes—they are not Western or Southern scenes—they are Ashby scenes.

Old Father Time seems to delight to level and cover all things from sight. We can take you up upon the northern slope of Mt. Nemosett and upon the northeastern slope of Watatic and show you the places where people once lived.

There are now but a few things that tell us that once there were homes there. A sunken pile of stone shows us that there the old oaken bucket hung in the well—a projection where once was the foundation,

points to where the fireplace was, where the family sat and thought and talked. I ask my companions, Whose homes were these? They cannot tell. The memories of the older generations only hold the secret. A few years more and time will level and hide the marks that now remain. An ancient writer has said that it is the office of history to *rescue* from oblivion the deeds and virtues of men and record them. We would say, it is the work of your society to seek out and mark the spot where these deeds were done. We congratulate you on so permanent a work.

We accept this tablet from your society today, which marks the spot where began nearly the first page of Ashby history. We accept it, realizing that it is a trust, that we are to preserve it from defacement, that we are to perpetually care for its surroundings.

We also extend our friendly hand to all the people of Fitchburg. Our hearty wish for you all, for ourselves, is that the history we make, whether it be recorded or unrecorded, may be worthy of record or monumental mark.

"The Star Spangled Banner" was then sung by the Ashby united choirs, after which President Willis introduced the orator of the day, Hon. Ezra S. Stearns, Secretary of State of New Hampshire, and a lineal descendant of John Fitch. His address commanded the closest attention, and after the applause following its close had subsided, the audience joined the choir in singing "America," which concluded the program.

The weather was favorable, the attendance gratifyingly large, the dedication a complete success, and a source of pleasure and profit to all who attended.

# ADDRESS

BY HON. EZRA S. STEARNS.

Long ago, near the site of this memorial, in an isolated clearing surrounded by sombre forests, stood a dwelling, and in time of war a garrison, that sheltered a human family. This arena, to-day smiling in peace and inviting rest, was once the scene of carnage and massacre. The soil was crimson with the blood of two dying men, and seven persons were led into captivity. The story of the tragedy lives in the traditions, and is a part of the written annals, of a former century.

Lunenburg, by a grant of the general court, was severed from the wilderness in 1718, and until 1764 the town included Fitchburg and the southern part of Ashby. For many years it was a frontier town, and the early inhabitants were inured to the dangers and disciplined in the activities of the border. The garrison, burned on the site of this memorial, was on the line dividing the settlement and the wilderness, and the peculiar fortunes of its inmates were the accidents of an exposed and exterior situation.

John Fitch removed to Lunenburg in 1732, and three years later he bought of David Farnsworth a part of house lot No. 66, of which James Richardson, of Woburn, was the original proprietor. In the deed the modest homestead was estimated at thirty-five and three-fourths acres, and is described as adjoining land of Ephraim Pierce. It was

situated on the Lancaster road, and about two miles south of Lunenburg centre. At this date nearly all the families were residing in the south-eastern part of the original grant, and for a few years the home of John Fitch was in the midst of the more thickly settled part of the town. Soon after he had become a resident of Lunenburg the town granted to him and seven others "all that Room behind ye seats in ye Front Gallery in ye Meeting House for to Build a Long Pew or Seat for themselves and wives forever to set in."

Beginning about 1736, settlements were simultaneously begun in Ashburnham, Winchendon, New Ipswich, Rindge, and Peterborough. For a few years Lunenburg enjoyed the security of an interior position. Relieved for a season from an exacting defence of the border, a decade of peace was attended with rapid growth and great prosperity. Settlements were rapidly extended towards the northern part of the town, and westward over a considerable part of the territory now included in Fitchburg. Partaking of a spirit of expansion that pervaded the settlement, John Fitch sold his homestead, and purchased of Capt. Ephraim Wetherbee one hundred and twenty acres on the northern boundary of the town. In the deed of conveyance this land is described as lying at a place called "the rendezvous," and adjoining Townsend line. Subsequently he purchased ten acres of land adjoining. In 1739 he built a house and removed his family hither. Here, with sudden changes of fortune, he resided over thirty years. Here his younger children were born, and a reasonable measure of prosperity rewarded his honest toil. Here the Indians attacked his dwelling, and here two soldiers were slain while defending the frontier, and himself and family carried into captivity. His house was located on the Northfield road. The history of this famous highway is a part of the annals of Lunenburg. In the month of April, 1733, the general court

granted a township, described as adjacent to Northfield, to Josiah Willard and his associates, many of whom were residents of Lunenburg. For several years the township was called Earlington, and sometimes written Arlington. By the adjustment of the province line, in 1741, it was found to be within New Hampshire, and subsequently received the present name of Winchester. It was stipulated in the grant that within two years the grantees should "clear and make a convenient travelling road, twelve feet wide, from Lunenburg to Northfield." This historic highway, the price of a township, was constructed through the wilderness, a distance of forty-two miles, in the summer and autumn of 1733. At many points the location of the road is established by contemporaneous records. Beginning near the centre of Lunenburg, its course was northerly to a point near the North Cemetery, thence westerly to near the present line of Fitchburg. Probably to avoid the rivers, which would be met if the same course was continued, it then bore northerly to the Fitch garrison, and here, making nearly a right angle, the continued course was westerly through the northern part of Ashburnham and Winchendon, then an ungranted wilderness.

In after years the abrupt angle in the road at the house of John Fitch was the parting of the ways for travellers and scouting parties going north to New Ipswich, Rindge, or Peterborough, and those going west to Ashburnham and beyond. On account of its position in the lines of travel, it was called "the rendezvous" before there was any settlement in the immediate vicinity. Mindful of the advantages of the situation, John Fitch, at an early date, set up a house of entertainment for man and beast. Here on the frontier the weary traveller, resting by the wayside, found rude accommodation and simple fare, while a primitive dwelling in the wilderness sheltered a family and contributed to their support.

The years of the early residence of John Fitch at this place were years of peace and prosperity. The fortunes of Lunenburg and the surrounding towns were materially amended, clearings were enlarged and a spirit of emigration made renewed encroachments on every hand upon the receding forests. Suddenly the ominous shadows of war fell upon the young and prosperous settlements. Confidence surrendered to fear, and a general sentiment of alarm everywhere prevailed. The dwellers upon the unprotected borders returned to the older and fortified towns. The settlements in Ashburnham, Winchendon, New Ipswich, Rindge and Peterborough were suddenly deserted. Lunenburg again became a border town, and again assumed the dangers and responsibilities of a defence of the frontier. Again the tillers of the soil were attended in the fields by soldiers, and harvests were gathered under the cover of muskets. A war between England and France naturally involved the English and the French colonies in America, and to the dangers and hardships of civilized warfare was added the menace of predatory attacks by the Indians in alliance with the French. The King George, or the first French and Indian War, beginning in 1744 and continuing four years, fell most heavily upon the frontiers. The line of the greatest danger was on the border of the wilderness.

That John Fitch, in a time of peace and comparative security, settled in a remote part of the township is unworthy of note. If at the outbreak of the war he had joined the fugitives from the outer settlements, who were hastening past his door, and if with them he had found a secure retreat within the lines of defence, the town of Fitchburg would have sought some other name, and neither monument nor memorial would perpetuate his memory. When all the exterior settlements were deserted, he remained, where the brave are ever found, in the line of



defence. He firmly stood on the picket line between the foe and the dwellers of Lunenburg. His house was seven and one-half miles from the centre of the town, and three and one-half miles from the nearest neighbor. Aided and encouraged by the province, a series of block-houses or garrisons was constructed on the exterior lines of Townsend, Lunenburg, and Westminster, and throughout the war a company of soldiers under pay of the province was detailed for the defence of this section of the frontier. For the summer of 1748, a company of which Edward Hartwell was captain, consisting of forty-seven men, was raised for this service, and while constituting an organized force they were stationed in squads along the border of the defended towns. Ten soldiers were assigned to the garrisons on the line of Townsend, ten to Lunenburg, fifteen to Westminster, and three were stationed at Leominster. The remaining nine, comprising the officers and a body guard, constituted a staff of inspection. Every week the company was assembled and inspected at the house of John Fitch, and again assigned to scouting parties or to the several garrisons.

Notwithstanding these measures of defence, in the summer of 1748 the Indians made a successful raid upon the borders of Lunenburg. The story of the attack has been told many times, and frequently with misstatement of fact and with unauthorized embellishments from the overflowing fountain of tradition. All the witnesses to the tragedy were slain or carried into captivity, and it was several months before the details were learned from the returning captives. The military orders and the public prints of the time announce that two soldiers were slain and that the family was missing, and in all the early accounts the allegation of captivity was inferential.

On the day of the tragedy two of the four soldiers stationed at the garrison were absent on account of sickness, while John Fitch and the two remaining soldiers were in

the field near the garrison. About eleven o'clock in the forenoon of Tuesday, July 5, 1748, the Indians made a sudden attack, and instantly one of the soldiers was slain, while John Fitch and the remaining soldier escaped unharmed within the garrison. The Indians besieged the fort, and a stubborn defence ensued. After an hour and a half of unequal warfare, the soldier was fatally shot through a porthole in the garrison.

The solitary defender of a wife and five children continued a hopeless conflict for a short time, and then surrendered. The Indians killed an ox, plundered and burned the garrison, and swiftly conducted their seven captives beyond the danger of pursuit. John Fitch, in his account of the affair, makes no specific statement concerning the number of Indians in the attacking party. The *Boston Weekly News Letter* of July 14, estimates the number at thirty or forty, while other accounts assert that there were about eighty. In any event there were enough, and from the standpoint of John Fitch a few more or less would not have changed his fortunes.

The firing at the fort must have been heard by the nearest neighbors. An alarm was sounded, and before sundown forty soldiers were assembled around the smoking ruins of the garrison. They discovered the dead body of their comrade in the field where he fell, and erroneously conjectured that he had been slain while attempting to escape from the fort. Near the pathway leading to the spring they found a bonnet and a pail, which probably at the first note of alarm the wife of John Fitch had hurriedly dropped as she hastened to the garrison. Again in error, the soldiers concluded that the Indians had secured a captive while she was going to the spring for water. They found the body of their other comrade within the garrison where he fell, but it was only a lifeless trunk; his head had been consumed in the flames of the burning building.

Through a justifiable fear of renewed hostilities, it is probable that a pursuit of the enemy and the recovery of the captives were not attempted. An extended line of frontier was poorly fortified, and the number and purpose of the enemy were unknown. The necessity of defence was more imperative than retaliation.

Capt. Edward Hartwell, on whom devolved the herculean task of defending, with less than fifty men, a score of block-houses and many miles of frontier, was poorly prepared for any aggressive measures. The continued firing in the woods along the border announced that all the Indians had not retired with their captives. A few days later Col. Samuel Willard, of Lancaster, who was in command of the forces in his section, ordered out a considerable number of men for a brief service along the border. The minute men of Lunenburg were rallied, and joining with the enlisted soldiers, they strengthened the lines of defence, and made several excursions into the country beyond. On the seventh day of July the Indians appeared "three miles further into the town than the garrison which they had destroyed," and there pursued and fired upon David Goodridge, who escaped unharmed.

This was the last appearance of hostile Indians in this vicinity. During the six years next ensuing there was a suspension of hostilities, and when the war was renewed in 1754, the Indians were less employed, Lunenburg was protected by exterior settlements, and a general feeling of security prevailed. At this date John Fitch was forty years of age. The exact age of his wife is not recorded. Catherine was thirteen years old, John eleven, Paul six and one-half, Jacob four, and Susannah sixteen months. Under these circumstances, assured of certain sufferings and uncertain fate, apparently there was little choice between captivity and death.

Their enforced and hurried journey through the wilder-

ness, with an uncertain and insufficient supply of food, was attended by hardships and sufferings approaching the utmost limit of human endurance. In addition to the babe, two other children were nourished upon the breast of their mother. Their bed was the earth, and their only coverlet was the verdure of the forest. Paul, the third child in the order of age, and who lived to advanced years, was accustomed to relate that he was transported on the back of an Indian. In the early progress of the party his face was toward the savage, and the smell of the Indian making him sick, he cried so lustily that he was turned around and again bound to the back of his human transport; and thus, with his eyes fastened on his receding home, every hour increasing the uncertainty of a safe return, and with limbs painful from the pressure of thongs, he traversed the weary miles of an unbroken wilderness. Jacob, the youngest son, was also transported on the back of an Indian, and was crippled for life. In other respects well formed, his legs were of dwarfed size on account of the rigor with which he was bound.

The war was practically ended before the arrival of the family in Canada, and their detention in captivity was of short duration. The suspension of hostilities was immediately followed by a general exchange of prisoners, and John Fitch and his family fortunately were included in the early exchanges. Attended by five French officers, the family, with other prisoners, arrived in New York by way of Albany and the Hudson river on the twenty-third day of September, or eleven weeks and three days after their capture. They were not immediately exchanged, and their continued progress by way of Providence in Rhode Island, and Boston, was considerably delayed by continued sickness. The father and his children survived the grievous ordeal, and subsequently enjoyed many years of happiness and prosperity at the old homestead. The wife of John

Fitch fell by the wayside. The woman was worn with the fatigue of a prolonged and exacting journey. The mother was weak and reduced in a constant ministration upon her offspring. Her maternal love, from the vital fountains of her breast, divided her strength with her sick and nursing children, and, yielding up her life for them, she died at Providence, December 24, 1748. Dear to her descendants, and revered by all who read the sad story of her sufferings and death, is the memory of a faithful wife, a self-sacrificing and loving mother, a brave and Christian woman, Susannah Fitch.

In an account of this affair, written several years ago, it is stated that the name of one of the soldiers was Fletcher, and a later writer introduces the name of Perkins, but neither of these names appears on the roll of Capt. Edward Hartwell's company. The two unfortunate soldiers were Zaccheus Blodgett and Joseph Jennings, and upon the company roll in the column giving the dates of discharge against the name of each of these is written "July 5, 1748."

Zaccheus Blodgett, the son of Jacob and Mary Blodgett, was born in Chelmsford March 17, 1726. He enlisted April 15, 1748. In 1749, Oliver Blodgett, then residing in Dracut, gave an order for the payment of the wages due "Zaccheus Blodgett who was killed by the Indians last year when under the command of Capt. Edward Hartwell." In the same document he alleges that he is a brother of the deceased soldier. This statement is supported by a certificate of Capt. Edward Hartwell, dated February 5, 1748-'9, alleging that Zaccheus Blodgett was a soldier in his company, and that he was killed on the fifth day of July last. Joseph Jennings was drafted, and was assigned to Capt. Hartwell's company April 15, 1748. He was an apprentice of Samuel Bliss, of Warren, then called Western. In January, 1749, Mr. Bliss presented to the general

court a petition alleging that his servant man was impressed and sent to Lunenburg, and was there killed, and requests compensation for the loss of the man's time and a good gun which he took with him. The province government ordered the delivery of a gun to the petitioner, and, in the absence of any additional compensation for his losses, it is assumed there were no spare apprentices in the government stores.

In Torrey's History of Fitchburg it is stated that John Fitch and his family were ransomed with money raised by residents of Bradford. In earlier times the freedom of unfortunate captives was often purchased, but in the war beginning in 1744, the hostile Indians were allies of the French, and their captives were held and treated as prisoners of war. John Fitch had no relatives, and probably no acquaintances, in Bradford. It is further asserted that the soldiers instituted a pursuit of the Indians, but returned upon finding a letter written by John Fitch, and fastened to a tree, imploring them to give up the pursuit, since the Indians had assured him of safety if unmolested, and of death if pursued. This statement is not sustained by the records of the time. In the account of the capture in the *Boston News Letter* of July 14, and in a military order of Col. Willard of July 7, the captivity of the family is given as an inference, and not as an absolute fact. If such a letter had been found, it is more than probable the capture would have been asserted without conjecture or qualification.

It was the fertile imagination of the same writer that introduced "a certain half-tamed Indian called Surdody," whose wigwam had been ruined by John Fitch. Surdody is a good name for an Indian of any degree of domestication, but the story is improbable. It is a matter of regret, that without investigation several subsequent writers have engraven an improbable story in the annals of Lunenburg.

After three years of war, and for many preceding years, it will not be accepted without proof that any Indian was suffered to reside in the vicinity. The attributes of character assigned to Surdody, and the many other Indian stories of harbored revenge and rewarded kindness, are mainly traditional. The Indians engaged in war by instinct, and not for the lofty purpose of redressing the wrongs of the injured Surdodies of their race. Led, possibly, by a Canadian officer, they made a raid on the borders of Lunenburg under the plea of war. They selected the most exposed and solitary point in the line of defence, and if, in the last stages of their march, they came over the Northfield road, they were thus led directly to the point of attack. Previous to the assault they had not been discovered in this vicinity. The firing in the woods, and the attacks upon David Goodridge of Lunenburg and William Bowman of Westminster, were subsequent events. The narrative is complete, if not conventional, without Surdody.

At different times, and by successive writers, many dates have been assigned to the capture of John Fitch. The documents cited leave no room for doubt, and fix the date as July 5, 1748.

The story of those troublous times, in which John Fitch is a prominent character, embraces only a few years in his life. Reference to the manner and the character of the man, and to the more placid and uneventful passages of his career, has been purposely delayed. He was a descendant, in the fourth generation, from Zachary Fitch, an English emigrant, who was an early resident of Lynn, where he was admitted a freeman, September 7, 1638. Removing to Reading in 1644, he was a deacon, and for several years a selectman. He died June 9, 1662. Samuel Fitch, one of the eight children of Deacon Zachary and Mary Fitch, was born March 6, 1645. He married April

23, 1673, Sarah Lane, a daughter of Job and Sarah Lane of Billerica. She died October 9, 1679, and he married, second, July 26, 1681, Rebecca Merriam. He resided in Reading, where he died in 1684. Two of his three children died in infancy. Samuel Fitch, son of Samuel and Sarah (Lane) Fitch, was born in Reading May 4, 1674. He married, March 20, 1695, Elizabeth Walker, born February 13, 1677-'8, a daughter of Joseph and Sarah (Wyman) Walker, of Billerica; she died November 26, 1716, and he married, second, Eunice Taylor, a daughter of John and Eunice (Wooley) Taylor. From the estate of his grandfather, Job Lane, he inherited one-fourth, or 375 acres, of the Winthrop farm in Billerica. He built a house and settled there about the date of his first marriage. He was prosperous in business and prominent in public affairs. In 1729 the town of Bedford, including a considerable part of Billerica and the Fitch homestead, was incorporated, and Samuel Fitch was the first town clerk and a member of the first board of selectmen. He died April 4, 1742; his widow, Eunice, died August 27, 1767.

John Fitch, the sixth of the eight children of Samuel and Elizabeth (Walker) Fitch, was born in Billerica, now Bedford, February 12, 1707-'8. His brothers, Samuel, Joseph, Benjamin, Jeremiah, and Zachariah were men of ability, and prominent in business and public affairs. Capt. Zachariah Fitch, of Groton, was a son of Zachariah. Sarah (Fitch) Crosby, the wife of Capt. Josiah Crosby, of Milford, N. H., and the mother of a distinguished family, was a daughter of Joseph. Zachariah Fitch, of Boston, who died about 1745, and whose heirs conveyed three hundred acres of land in the south-west part of Fitchburg, and Joseph Fitch, the father of Margaret (Fitch) Downe, the wife of William Downe, were second cousins of John Fitch.

About the date of his removal to Lunenburg, John Fitch married Susannah Gates, a daughter of Simon and Hannah



(Benjamin) Gates, of Stow. She was a descendant in the fourth generation of Stephen and Ann Gates, who settled in Hingham, and subsequently resided in Lancaster and Cambridge. By this marriage two children were born in the southern part of Lunenburg and three at the garrison.

About the time the fortification of his house was begun he received from the estate of his father a substantial legacy, and during the few years immediately preceding his captivity, his possessions were above the average of his time. In the burning of his dwelling, in the destruction of personal property, and in other losses and expenses incident to his captivity, his estate was considerably depreciated, but subsequent events and information represent that he remained in comfortable circumstances. In a memorial to the general court soon after his return from captivity, he enumerates his losses and alleges poverty, but in this proceeding he followed a custom of the time. The prevailing language of petition was a licensed expression of an exaggerated condition of suffering and poverty. In recognition of his losses the general court granted him £8. Better fortune, however, was awaiting him. By the will of Simon Gates, the father of his wife, he received at this time both land and money, and until the depreciation and losses incident to the Revolution, he was in affluent circumstances.

Immediately after his return from captivity he renewed his home on the frontier. Upon the site of the ruined garrison he built a house somewhat larger and more pretentious than the average dwelling of that period. February 14, 1750-'51, he married Elizabeth (Bowers) Pierce, born September 2, 1710, a daughter of Samuel and Esther Bowers, of Groton, and the widow of David Pierce, of Lunenburg. Two daughters, Mary and Sarah, were the only children by this marriage.

By occupation John Fitch was a carpenter. In those

days all were farmers, not omitting the minister, the lawyer, and the doctor, and he divided his time in tilling the soil and in the pursuit of his trade. In his time the favorite employment of capital was a traffic in land. In addition to the purchase and sale of several properties in Massachusetts, he bought and sold many parcels of wild and of cultivated land in New Hampshire. The registry of deeds in several counties attests his active participation in the prevailing speculations of his time. Beginning about 1750, and continuing several years, there was an increasing current of emigration from the older to the frontier towns. The settlements in this vicinity were largely increased. Lunenburg, Townsend, and Dorchester Canada then included Ashby, Fitchburg, and a part of Gardner. These towns were large in area, and many of the settlers, in attending church and other public meetings, were obliged to travel several miles over rude and unfinished highways. Almost simultaneously the dwellers in the remote portions of the three original towns proposed the incorporation of two new towns, now known as Fitchburg and Ashby.

Of the project to divide the town of Lunenburg, John Fitch was an early and an earnest advocate. The eastern part of the town was first settled, and continued to be the most populous. In that section were the meeting-house, the stocks, and the pound. Here was the repository of the records. Here resided the ruling element of the town, and here were found all the requisites of the seat of government. While the incorporation was solely within the province of the general court, the petitioners desired to fortify their solicitations with the consent and endorsement of a majority of the town. For seven years the sentiment and voice of the people were divided on the proposed geographical line, and the proposition was debated on the issues of convenience, prejudice, and selfishness. The effort was continually renewed by a defeated minority until a more liberal

spirit prevailed. The town, in a generous and considerate manner, in January, 1764, recognized the rights and desires of the minority, and assented to the proposed division. Immediately the inhabitants of the town instructed John Fitch, Amos Kimball, Samuel Hunt, Ephraim Whitney, and Jonathan Wood to obtain from the general court an act of incorporation. Their mission was eminently successful. The town was incorporated February 3, 1764.

A year later Ashburnham, including the whole of Dorchester Canada, was incorporated. Evidently the creation of Fitchburg and Ashburnham disconcerted the petitioners and delayed the incorporation of Ashby, which was not consummated until March 6, 1767. On account of these sudden changes in town boundaries within a space of a little more than three years, John Fitch, while occupying the same homestead, was successively a resident of Lunenburg, Fitchburg and Ashby. He was a resident, and the site of the old garrison was a part, of Fitchburg from February 3, 1764, to March 6, 1767. In the creation of Ashby he was a prominent factor, and was chairman of the committee which secured the act of incorporation.

While a resident of Lunenburg and Fitchburg, John Fitch was not prominent in town affairs. In Lunenburg he was five times elected to a minor office, and twice appointed on a committee to lay out a highway. In Fitchburg he was chosen a surveyor of highways and a fire warden. From the fact that during these years he was not prominent in official affairs, it should not be assumed that he did not possess qualities of mind and of character inviting preferment. The reasons are obvious. He lived in an isolated part of Lunenburg, and far removed from the activities of the settlement, and during the short time he lived in Fitchburg the conditions remained unchanged. He resided about eight miles from the centre of Lunenburg, and over six miles from the centre of Fitchburg. The isolated

situation of his home is aptly illustrated in the records of Fitchburg. In 1764 the town was divided into two school-districts. John Fitch lived so remote from the inhabited part of the town that he was not included in either district, and in a most considerate manner the town provided for the schooling of his children by a separate vote.

In Ashby the conditions were materially changed. The early inhabitants were mainly in the southern part of the town, and he was brought into closer contact with the community of his townsmen. At the first town-meeting he was elected moderator, selectman, and constable.

With the beginning of another year there arose an animated contest over the location of the meeting-house, and he belonged to the defeated party. For this or some other reason he was not continuously elected to office, but the records give evidence that he enjoyed the respect and esteem of his townsmen. In 1772 he was chosen one of a committee for the sale of pews in the new meeting-house. In the autumn of 1771 he sold ninety acres of his homestead, including the buildings, to Ebenezer Stone, of Westford, and the remaining thirty acres to Joseph Lee, of Concord. In the early summer of 1772, he removed from Ashby to Rindge, New Hampshire. Thomas Hutchinson, whose wife was Mary Fitch, the eldest daughter by the second marriage, had removed to Rindge the preceding year. Of the remaining children of John Fitch, at this date, Catherine, the wife of William Campbell, was residing probably in Harvard. Of John, the eldest son, no record is found. Paul was residing in Lancaster, and Susannah had become the wife of Joshua Chase, of Shirley. Only Sarah, the youngest child, and Jacob, the cripple, removed to Rindge with the family.

In addition to lands in other towns, at this date he owned in Rindge, in his own right and jointly with others, six lots containing five hundred and seventy-five acres.

One of the two slaves named in the early records of the town was "a negro man, Zeno, servant of John Fitch."

In 1776, with other citizens of Rindge, he signed the association test, pledging life and property in the defence of American liberty. He continued to reside in the town, and his name is occasionally found in the records until the spring of 1779, when he removed to Harvard, Mass. The two children who lived with him when he removed to Rindge had found homes for themselves. Sarah was residing with her brothers, and Jacob had removed to Caledonia, Vermont.

He purchased a homestead of fifty-seven acres in the northern part of Harvard, and there probably he intended to live the remainder of his days. It is evident that during the Revolution his estate suffered waste in a general depreciation incident to the unsettled state of business affairs. His lands had been sold, and his little homestead in Harvard was the only property of record that remained. His wife died January 20, 1780, and he, of more than three score years and ten, was left alone and among comparative strangers.

The days of his robust strength and prosperity have ended. His remaining life is cheerless and sad. In 1764 he was one of the only two men in Fitchburg paying taxes on money at interest. After many years of active strength and affluence, he arrived, in 1782, in Jaffrey, New Hampshire, in poverty and in feeble health. According to the laws of the time, he had gained no legal settlement since his removal from Ashby. In former times John Fitch removed from town to town. In this instance he was carried by the town authorities of Jaffrey to the town of Ashby. The date of the transit was 1784.

He first came to Ashby in the flush and strength of early manhood. Wasted in estate and broken in health, he now returns to die amid the scenes of his former activ-

ity. Once, in conscious strength and with unfaltering courage, he bravely defended the frontier, and now, aged, worn, and penniless, nothing is left to him but the memory of a life interspersed with uneven fortunes. His feebleness increased with the weight of added years. His eyes grew dim, and his sorrows were assuaged in the mists of a fading memory. The pathway of the brave old man was obscured in the twilight of approaching death. The end was ever near, and yet, in the shadow of his former vigor, with failing strength and faltering steps, he was ten years in walking to the grave. He died April 8, 1795, aged 87 years.

For several years he lived in the family of Abraham Gates, not far from his former home, and during the last two years of his life the town of Ashby contributed in some measure to his support.

In stature, John Fitch was about medium height, and in the vigor of his manhood he was robust and strong. In old age his form was bowed and his movements slow. His complexion was unusually dark, and his features were firm and clearly defined. He was direct and sincere in speech, and, with a certain measure of reserve, he was affable and dignified in manner. In character he was above reproach, and his integrity was the unimpaired inheritance of a pious ancestry. He was an honest, unassuming man. He sought no preferment and shunned no duty. He lived in seclusion and scorned self-advancement, but whenever called to the direction of public affairs, his service bears the imprint of force and decision. Measured by the standard of his time, he was an educated man. In childhood and youth he lived in an atmosphere of refinement. His parents and his brothers and sisters were people of intelligence and culture. He wrote a fair, round hand, and a few specimens of his composition that have been preserved, are expressed in clear and intelligent terms. His children, reared remote

from public schools, and dependent upon home instruction, were well educated, and two of them, Jacob and Mary, were school teachers at an early age. The courage of John Fitch was conspicuous. During the Indian wars brave men only tenanted the out-posts. Twice blessed is heroism that springs from a noble purpose. His service at the garrison was voluntary, and his vigilance was the security of the settlement. This willing service, in behalf of many human lives, passes from bravery to the higher plane of duty and heroism.

Such traits of character command respect. Such conduct elicits the spontaneous gratitude of all who enjoyed the fruits of sacrifice. His reward was not long delayed. While he still lived among his townsmen, and while his presence continued to freshen their memory of his good service, they gave an unmistakable expression of esteem and gratitude. In adopting the name of Fitchburg, they rewarded him with an honor imperishable. Coined in the mint of affection, the name of the city has a peculiar significance. Fitchburg is a synonym of heroism. It has its origin in the story of four long years of watch and vigilance at the lone garrison in the wilderness. It was first spoken in memory of the misfortune and bereavement of a brave defender of the frontier, and it was stamped on the brow of an infant town in lasting honor to the name of him who served and suffered in the common cause of the community. With this memorial, after the lapse of many years, the city of Fitchburg, rejoicing in the name, pays a willing tribute to the memory of John Fitch.

## APPENDIX.

### PAPERS RELATING TO THE CAPTURE OF JOHN FITCH AND DEFENCE OF THE FRONTIER.

On account of the expected "rupture between the crowns of Great Britain and France" the following sums were appropriated "to put the inland frontiers in this Province in a better posture of defence."

	£	s.	d.
West Precinct of Groton . . . . .	33	06	8
• Townsend . . . . .	66	13	4
Lunenburg and Leominster . . . . .	66	13	4
Narraganset No. 2 . . . . .	100	....	..
Pequog . . . . .	100	....	..
Nichaway . . . . .	100	....	..
New Rutland . . . . .	100	....	..
New Salem . . . . .	100	....	..
	666	13	4

[*Mass. Council Records, Nov. 11, 1743.*]

#### FROM BOSTON WEEKLY NEWS LETTER, JULY 14, 1748.

Last Tuesday was sev'night [July 5] about 30 or 40 of the enemy came upon a garrison House, at the out-skirts of Lunenburgh and two soldiers posted there were both killed near the Garrison, one being knock'd on the head the other shot thro' the Body as he was endeavoring to escape. The Master of the House Mr. John Fitch 'tis tho't was seized by them in the Field, as he was spreading Hay and his Wife as she was bringing Water from the spring about 20 Rods Distance, a Pail and her Bonnet being found near the Path. The House they set on fire and burnt it to the Ground and the body of one of the slain soldiers lay so near thereto that the Head was burnt from the shoulders. The neighboring Towns being soon alarmed about 40 men muster'd and got upon the Spot before Sundown but the Enemy had withdrawn: however they Kept a strict Watch and Guard all night and just about dawn



of the next day they heard a noise among the Bushes which they supposed to be some of the Enemy that were left as Spies who perceiving the Number that came against them skulked away without being discovered. Mr. Fitch, his Wife and 5 Children being missing 'tis concluded they were taken Prisoners by the Enemy.

Same issue of the paper says:

Last Thursday [July 7] a Man at Lunenburg was waylaid and shot at by some Indians as was also another at Township No. 2 [Westminster] but both happily escaped.

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You are hereby Directed forthwith to order as many off your Troop to be Ready to march to morrow morning as you Can Poſſebel and I will Go with you for ther is two Souldiers Killed at fitches fort and the man and his wife and five children are caryed Into Captivity as is ſuſpected att Lunenbergs

SAMLL WILLARD Coll

Lancaster July ye 7th 1748

to Ephraim Wilder junr Capt

If to go to Nargonſett Nk ord Paguoage ord Nichewoage you may Ride or go afoot as you fee good

Encloſed— On his Majestys Sirvis

To Cap Ephraim Wilder Jun in Lancaster

[*Mass. Archives, Vol. 92, p. 144.*]

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To His Excellency William Shirley Esqr Governour with the Honourable the Council of the Province of the Mafsachusetts Bay in aſsembled.

The Petition of the Inhabitants of Lunenburg & Leominster humbly ſheweth, that,

Whereas the Indian Enemy have very lately been among us in considerable numbers & with unusual Boldneſs, And have destroyed one of our Garrisons, killing and captivating the Inhabitants, And We have no more than Ten Souldiers allow'd by The Government for our Protection (who are all in Lunenburg) And tho' in Leominster we have a small Scout of ye Inhabitants, The Circumstances of this Town are so weak & exposed that the Comanding officer can hardly think it prudent to send them into the Woods; So that we are forced to look upon ourselves in a very hazardous as well as distressed Case, to such a degree that we cannot many of us, labour on our Farms or abide in our Houses with any tolerable safety; But ourselves and Families must be in danger of

suffering much either by Penury or the direct Insults of a cruel and barbarous Nation, or both of them.

It is therefore, may it please your Excellency & Honours, Our humble & earnest Prayer that you would grant us for our protection such a Number of Souldiers as in Your Great Wisdom and Fatherly Compalsion you shall deem to be requisite for the Preservation of our Estates, our Liberties and our Lives. Such Kindnefs & tender Care in your Excellency and Honours, We shall ever with the sincerest Gratitude remember

And Your Petitioners shall ever pray &c.

Jonathan Hubbard	Samuel Braidstreet	Jonathan White
Thomas Prentice	John Manfield	Joseph Wheelock
Benj <sup>a</sup> Bellows, Jr.	Ephraim Kimball	Thomas Wilder
Jon <sup>a</sup> Hubbard Jr.	Timothy Parker	Josiah Carter
Benj <sup>a</sup> Bellows.	John Gibson	Jonathan Johnson
Elezer Hooten	Samuel Cummings	Nathan Johnson
Josiah Dodge	Daniel Huften	David Johnson
Joseph Chaplin	Jon <sup>a</sup> Willard, Jur	Isaac Johnson
Benj <sup>a</sup> Goodridge	Timothy Bonareft	David Robbins
Nathan Heywood	Will <sup>m</sup> Henry	Abijah Smith
Asael Hartwell	Benjamin Gary	Thomas White
David Chaplin	John Martin	Joshua Walker
Edward Hartwell Jur	Ebenezer Gage	Nathan Bennet
Joshua Goodridge	Thomas Litch	Charles Emes
Reuben Gibson	Thomas Brown	James Pool
Amos Kimball	Thomas Carter	John Heywood
Ephraim Pearce	Samuel Poole	Benajah Davenport
John Dunfmoor	Thomas Stearns	Jacob Peabody
Reuben Dodge	timothy Starns	Jonathan Houghton
	David Taylor	

[Mass. Archives, Vol. 73, p. 187.]

July 8, 1748.

#### LETTER TO COL. SAMUEL WILLARD, WITHOUT SIGNATURE.

BOSTON, July 8, 1784.

His Excellency having received advice of the Destruction of a Garrifon at Lunenburgh & the Killing & Captivating of all the People in it, and expecting that the Indians will make some further Afsaults; bids me tell you that It is his Order to you that you immediately notify the exposed Places in your Regiment of their Danger that they may be upon their Guard; & that you also forthwith have a suitable Number of Men ready at an hours Warning to repair to any place where the Indians may appear for the defence of the Inhabitants & for the Annoyance & destruction of the Enemy whom they must attack & pursue so far as their strength will allow & if the Enemy be too strong immediately to

call in further Aid, that the Enemy may not get off without considerable Loss; And that you send good Officers with these detachments.

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#### MEMORIAL OF SELECTMEN AND OFFICERS OF LUNENBURG.

The Humble Remonstrance of the Commission officers And Select men of the Town of Lunenburg sheweth; That on the fifth Day of this Instant July, The Enemy befeited and Destroyed one of the outmost Garrisons In the Town aforesaid killed Two Soldiers and Captivated a family Consisting of a man and His wife and five Children And That on The seventh Day of the month They Discovered themselves in a bold Insulting, and unexpected manner Three miles further into town Than the Garrison was which they Had Destroyed where they Chafed and Shot at one of the Inhabitants, who Narrowly Escaped Their Hands; Since which we Have Had undoubted Signs of Their being amongst us which fill our Inhabitants with Terror and Surprise And Has been the occasion of Sundry of our Inhabitants Quitting Their Habitations and Removing out of Town, —And many more are meditating a Removal—being Destitute of that protection That is necessary from the province—Severall of the Garrisons built by order and Direction of the General Court are already Deserted for want of help.—and several more Garrisons of Equal Importance that were built at the Cost and Expence of particular men are Deserted likewise—And we fear That some of the other Garrisons may be Deserted Quickly if further protection is not afforded, for we Have now but Eight Soldiers and some of them sick.—That fatal Consequence of our thus fleeing before our Enemies must (we think) be obvious to Every one—our Pitiable and Distressed Circumstances will further appear to your Excellency if you Consider That now is the time for Securing the English Grain And Getting our Hay, which the Enemy is well apprized of—and proves unhappy for us Inasmuch as they Know where to find us, Even in our fields, and the time when to look for us (viz.) when the season is fit for our business, And How it is possible for us to Carry on our Husbandry business under our present Circumstances without Great Loss and Damage as well as Endangering our lives we Cannot Conceive for Three Days in four The Last week The Inhabitants were necessarily Rallied by Alarms And Hurried into the woods after the Enemy—And this we Have Just Reason to Conclude will be the Case frequently to be Called from our business for almost Daily the Enemy are Heard Shooting in the woods above us—And To be thus frequently Called from business in such a season must Impoverish us if the Enemy should not Destroy

us. — And what we Greatly Regret is our Enemies Having a Numerous Herd of our Cattle to support themselves with and feast upon—Amongst which they Have Repeatedly been Heard Shooting—from which we Conclude that there may be Great Slaughter made amongst our Cattle—And there is Reason to fear That the Comfortable Supply which they Can Have for provisions, together with our weak and Defenceless State may prove powerfull Incentives for Greater Numbers To Invade us, than Have as yet appeared—In fine by what Discoveries Have been made almost Daily It is past Dispute with us, that our Enemies are Daily watching of us, And viewing our Weakness, and waiting for a fit opportunity to Surprize and Destroy us—We therefore Humbly and Earnestly Entreat Your Excellency To Extend your pity and Compassion towards us. And That by sending of us a Sufficient Number of Men for our protection, Surely our present State which is Distress Calls for pity and Speedy Relief—We Humbly presume That the present assembly will Readily and Chearfully Grant pay and Subsistence To Such a number of soldiers as your Excellency should Impress and Send to us upon This Emergency—In Doing thus Your Excellency will Greatly oblige us the Subscribers your most Dutifull and obedient servants.—And Give seasonable and Necessary Relief To the Distressed Inhabitants of the Town of Lunenburg.

EDWARD HARTWELL	} Commission Officers
JONATHAN WILLARD	
JOSIAH DODGE	
JACOB GOULD	
BENJ <sup>a</sup> BELLINGS	

JONATHAN BRADSTREET	} Selectmen of Lunenburg
BENJ. GOODRIDGE	
JOHN GROUT	
BENJAMIN FOSTER	

Lunenburg, July 12th, 1748.

[Mass. Archives, Vol. 73, p. 189.]

#### LETTER FROM LIEUT. GOV. PHIPS TO MAJ. EDWARD HARTWELL.

BOSTON JULY. 15. 1748

SIR.

I have received & considered a Petition signed by you & other Inhabitants of Lunenburg & Leominster with other Representations made of the Danger of the People on the Frontiers; and I have taken the advice of the Council there upon, & find that there is no Establish-

ment made by the Legislature for the Pay & Subfistence of more Soldiers than are now upon your Frontier saving for the two loft at Lunenburgh which Coll. Willard has Directions to supply you with if you have not already enlifted new men So that all I conceive can be done (which I direct you earnestly to advise the Inhabitants of the respective exposed Places to do) is that they join together in their work for getting in their Harvest & a Suitable number of them guard while the rest are at work, all of them carrying their Arms & Ammunition with them: and upon any appearance of the Enemy the Chief Commanders of the Regiments of Militia are obliged both by Law & exprefs orders already given by the Gov<sup>r</sup> to send you immediate Succour

I am

Sir

Your Friend & Servant

S. PHIPS.

Maj. Edwd Hartwell

[*Mass. Archives, Vol. 53, p. 361.*]

LETTER FROM THE LIEUT. GOVERNOR TO COL. SAMUEL  
WILLARD.

BOSTON July 15, 1748

I have ordered the number of Fifty eight men for the Strengthening of your Frontier at this present juncture, & principally for guarding those Inhabitants that may be exposed to the Enemy in getting in their Harvests of Hay & English Grain:

The men must be proportioned as follows viz: for New Rutland, for Netchiwog, for Narraganset No. 2: Leominster, Lunenburg, Groton West Precinct & Townshend.

You must take effectual care that the Inhabitants that shall have the Benefit of these Men work & assist one another in getting in their Harvest One Day in One Mans Field another Day in other till their Harvest be got in: the soldiers to be wholly employed in guarding & not allowed to be taken off from Guarding by working with the Inhabitants: And unless they will conform to this Injunction you must employ the Soldiers in the Service elsewhere. and you must give the Command of each Party to some solid Man & they must be so quartered as that they may without danger & without loss of time get together for guarding the Inhabitants upon their first going out to their work

[*Mass. Archives, Vol. 53, p. 361.*]

LANCASTER July ye 19 1748

Capt White

Having repeated accounts of the indians Shooting and being tracked above you, you are hereby directed to Send Six able bodied men to Scout Constantly above Lunenburg and Leominster untill further order

Yours to serve

SAML WILLARD

[Mass. Archives, Vol. 92, p. 130.]

In the Boston *Evening Post* of October 3, 1748, and in the Boston *News Letter* of October 6, 1748, is found a news item dated New York, September 26, 1748:

"Last Friday [September 23] several French officers and three French Indians arrived here [New York] by the way of Albany who we hear are come to settle some affairs relating to an exchange of Prisoners taken on both sides."

In the Boston *Gazette* of October 4, 1748, is found the following news item dated New York, September 23:

"Arrived in town from Canada by Albany five French Gentlemen and brought with them several prisoners among whom were Mr. John Fitch of Lunenburg his wife and five children who was captured the 3<sup>d</sup> of July last."

## MEMORIAL OF SAMUEL BLISS.

To His Excellency William Shirley Esq<sup>r</sup> Gouvner Aand To the Hon<sup>ble</sup> His Maieftys Council for the Province of the maffecheust Bay & to ye Honourable Hous. Defember ye 26: 1748.

The memorial of Samuel Bliss of Western In the County of Worcestor and Province aforesd—

Whoo Had His sarvant man: Named Joseph ginins Impresed Into the Wars Laft May In 1748—by His: Capt<sup>n</sup> Noah Ashley of sd Town aboue sd: and sent to Corn<sup>l</sup> Chandlor att Worcestor and from thence To Lunenburg and there His sd man ginins was Killed by the Indians: In the Province Servis by Which means I sd Blifs Have Loft a good gun—Worth Ten pounds In old tenor money—and by all as afore mentioned I sd Bliss are a great Loofer Not only the Loss of my mans time But sd gun alfo: and The Prayer of you memorileft Humblely sheweth that your excellency and Honours Will In your Great Wisdom Confidar my

memorial and grant my Petition: being Ten pounds old tenor Money as a Reward for my gun and Hatchit and so forth—If your Excellency and Honors: shall seem it meet and as In Dewty Bound your memorialist shall ever pray and so forth per me

SAMWEL BLISS

In the House of Rep<sup>res</sup> Jany 18 1748.

Read and ordered that the Commisary General be directed to deliver the Memorialist a Gun out of the Province Store.

Sent up for concurrence

T. HUTCHINSON Lt Gov

In Council Jan. 18, 1748.

Read & Concur'd

J. WILLARD Secry

Consented to

W. SHIRLEY

[*Mass. Archives, Vol. 73, p. 295.*]

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DRACUTT Aprill ye 3<sup>d</sup>: 1749:

Mr Foy Esquire Treasurer of the Province of the Massachusetts Bay Sir, pleas to pay to Capt John Colburn the full of the Wages Due to Zacheus Blodgett who was killed by the Indians Last year when under the Command of Capt Edward Hartwell and in so doing you will very much oblige your humble servant and Brother to the above faid Zacheus.

OLIVER BLODGET.

[*Mass. Archives, Vol. 73, p. 405.*]

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LUNENBURG February the 5th 1748|9

These may certify that Zacheus Blodgett was the Laft Summer in his Majesties service under my Command and he is born upon my Last Muster Role who was killed by the Indian Enemy the fifth Day of July Last.

Attest

EDWARD HARTWELL.

[*Mass. Archives, Vol. 73, p. 104.*]

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In the House of Rep<sup>res</sup> Apl. 7, 1749.

Inasmuch as Zacheus Blogget a soldier in the Service of the Province was slain by the Indian Enemy the last summer, and having left no other estate than the Wages due from the Province

Therefore Ordered that the Treasurer be directed to pay s<sup>d</sup> Wages to Capt Sam'l Chamberlayne to be by him paid among the Bretheren and Sisters of the Dec'd according to Law.

Sent up for concurrence

T. HUTCHINSON, Lt Gov.

IN Council April 7, 1749

Read and Concurred

S. WILLARD Secy

Consented to

W. SHIRLEY

[Mass. Archives, Vol. 73, p. 403.]

### CAPT. EDWARD HARTWELL'S COMPANY IN THE YEAR 1748.

A Muster Roll of the Company in His Majesty's Service under the Command of Edward Hartwell, Captain:

Edward Hartwell, Capt.	from April 8 to Oct. 15, 1748.					
John Stevens, Lt.	"	"	"	"	"	"
John Holden, Serjt	"	"	15	"	17,	"
James Johnson, Clerk	"	"	11	"	"	"
Joseph Baker, Corp'l	"	"	15	"	"	"
Timothy Hal, "	"	"	15	"	16,	"
Fairbank More, Jun'r Centl	"	"	15	"	16,	"
Abner Holden	"	"	15	"	16,	"
William Bemas	"	"	15	"	16,	"
Jonathan Farnworth	"	"	15	"	17,	"
Elias Stone	"	"	15	"	17,	"
Ephraim Dutton	"	"	15	"	18,	"
Simon Farnworth	"	"	15	"	17,	"
Ebenezer Hadley	"	"	15	"	18,	"
John Thomson	"	"	15	"	18,	"
Elisha Pratt	"	"	15	"	18,	"
Ebenezer Wood	"	"	15	"	17,	"
Jonathan Pett	"	"	15	"	16,	"
Zaccheus Bloggett	"	"	15	"	July 5,	"
Samuel Wood	"	July 20	"	Oct. 18,	"	"
Joseph Jennings	"	Apl. 15	"	July 5,	"	"
Stephen Farnworth	"	Aug. 3	"	Oct. 16,	"	"
John Nichols	"	Apl. 15	"	"	17,	"
Nehemiah Wood	"	"	11	"	17,	"
Benoni Boynton Jun'r	"	"	11	"	16,	"
Benoni Boynton	"	"	15	"	Aug. 5,	"
Joseph Platts	"	Aug. 6	"	Oct. 16,	"	"
Nicholas Dyke	"	April 11	"	June 26,	"	"
Abel Platts	"	June 27	"	Oct. 16,	"	"
William Smith	"	Apr. 15	"	"	16,	"
James Preston	"	"	"	May 9,	"	"



Ephraim Stevens		from May 10 to Oct. 16, 1748.
Joshua Benjamin		" Apl. 11 " Aug. 8, "
Joseph Rumrill		" Aug. 9 " Oct. 17, "
Nehemiah Holden		" Apr. 15 " " 17, "
Oliver Barrett		" " " " " " "
William Gilford		" Apr. 18 " May 9, "
James King		" May 10 " Oct. 18, "
William Grahams		" Apr. 11 " " 16, "
Jonathan White	Leominster Scoutt	" June 24 " " 15, "
Joseph Wheelock		" " " " " " "
Thomas Wilder		" " " " " " "
Thomas Stearns	Narragansett Scout	" June 24 " Oct. 16, "
David Dunster		" " " " " " "
Joseph Holden Junr		" " " " " " "
Stephen Holden		" " " " " " "
Elisha Bigelow		" " " " " " "

Townsend 10 men; Lunenburg 10 men; Narragansett No. 2, 10 men;  
Leominster 3 men; Narragansett No. 2, five men.

Lunenburg Nov. 11, 1748.

I desire it may be observed that I received not His Excellency's Order  
for dismissing the above Company of Soldiers, till Oct. 15, in y<sup>e</sup> afternoon.

Suffolk ff. Decembr 22<sup>d</sup> 1748.

Major Edward Hartwell was Sworn to the foregoing Muster Roll in  
the usual form save that some of the Persons before named did not  
attend the Service in their own Persons during the whole of the time  
mentioned but by others in their stead.

[*Mass. Archives, Vol. 92, p. 144, 145.*]

#### PETITION OF JOHN FITCH.

To the Honorable Spencer Phipps Esq. Governour in Chief of the Province  
of the Massachusetts Bay in New England for the time being

To the Honorable His majesty's Council & House of Representatives in  
Generall Court Assembled

John Fitch Humbly

shews That in the year A. D. 1739 he purchased about 120 acres of  
Land about Seven miles and an half above Lunenburg Meeting House &  
about three miles and an Half above any of the Inhabitation on the Road  
Leading from Lunenburg to Northfield and there by Industry Built him  
a house and Improved so much Land as to Raise provision for his grow-  
ing Family and some to spare whereby he Entertained & Refreshed  
Travilers and being a Carpenter was furnished with such tools necessary

for that Buisness and being far Distant from Neighbours was obliged to keep the Cheif of his tools & Live within himself and had Husbandry utensels & House hold stuff and that upon the wars Breaking out altho he had no near Neighbours to Joyn with him in a Garrison yet Divers of the Inhabitance of Lunenburg knowing the Great security that a Garrison at his place might be urged him to Build one and many of the Inhabitance assisted & helped him in it after which the severall officers appointed over the souldiers and scouts ordered a quota to that Garrison & it was a place of Resort & Refreshment to town scouts & for Large scouts from Northfield Townshend Ashuelott & other places & your petitioner Received & Entertained them and in the year A. D. 1748 the scouts from Lunenburg & Townshend were ordered to meet there once every week and he had four souldiers allowed to keep said Garrison and on the fifth day of July in the same year by Reason of Bodily Infirmary there was but two souldiers with him, altho others with the scouts were to come that day yet on that day before noon and before the scouts came the Indian Enemy appeared and shot down one souldier upon being Discovered & Immediately drove him & the other souldier into the Garrison and after Beseiging the same about one Hour & half they killed the other souldier through the port Hole in the flanker and then your petitioner was Left alone with his wife and five Children soon after which he surrendred and became a prisoner with his said Family & the Enemy took and Carried away such things as they pleased & Burnt the House and Garrison with the Rest and then we Entred into a melancholly Captivity with one small Child on the mothers breast and two more became sucking Children in the way for want of provision which with other Hardships brought my Dear wife into a bad state of health and Languishment and in our Return being by New York, Road Island and providence there in December last she Departed this Life and when I with my five Children arrived to this Province we were objects of Charrity for food & Raiment which some Charitable people bestowed upon us yet your petitioners family are Dispearst by Reason of poverty and must so Remain unless some Charritable help may some way or other be bestowed for your petitioner is utterly unable to put himself again into sutable Circumstances and to bring home his Dispearst and melancholly Family having his Substance burnt as aforesaid & fences also and your petitioner begs Leave to Inform that he is utterly unable to build & furnish & fence and maintain his Dispearst family, two Children being a Continual Charge since our Captivity one being under the Doctors hands ever since, your petitioner also Lost his only Gun worth thirty pounds & an ox at the same time and is stock of Cattle are

Chiefly gone having no Hay Last year as in under very pitiable Circumstances and Humbly begs Relief in some way or other as this Honorable Court shall think Best & as in Duty Bound shall ever pray

JOHN FITCH

Decr. 1749

half his Stock of Catel Containing 10 hed of well grone Catel & all his swine no Tools of any sort no House hold utensell but one porrage pott writing & accounts

In the House of Rep<sup>ves</sup> April. 9. 1750.

Read and Ordered that there be allowed out of the publick Treasury to the Pet<sup>r</sup> or his order Eight pounds in consideration of his £8 Sufferings within mentioned. And to Enable him to Resettle himself and Family on His Plantation.

Sent up for concurrence

THO<sup>s</sup> HUBBARD Spk<sup>r</sup> pro Tempore

In Council April 9 1750 Read and Concurr'd

SAM<sup>l</sup> HOLBROOK D<sup>y</sup> Secry

Consented to—

S PHIPS



## ROLL OF MEMBERSHIP.

---

Adams, Henry B.,	Fitchburg.	Goodrich, Henry A.,	Fitchburg.
Austin, James A.,	"	*Goodrich, William Henry,	"
Bailey, Ebenezer,	"	Goodridge, Alonzo P.,	"
Bailey, E. Foster,	"	Greenman, Rev. Walter F.	"
Bailey, Harrison.	"	Harris, Charles C.,	"
Baker, Charles F.,	"	Jackson, Henry,	"
Baker, William,	"	Jaquith, Miss Mary E.,	"
Blood, Charles H.,	"	*Jewett, George,	"
Bodge, Rev. George M.,	Leominster.	Kilburn, William L.,	Lunenburg.
Brown, Mrs. Sarah C.,	Fitchburg.	Kimball, John W.,	Fitchburg.
Colburn, Irving W.,	"	Lowe, Arthur H.,	"
Crocker, Mrs. Martha E.,	Leominster.	Lowe, Mrs. Mary A. R.,	"
†Crocker, Mrs. Minerva C.,	Fitchburg.	Mason, Atherton P.,	"
Crocker, Samuel S.,	Leominster.	McIntire, Miss Adelaide Z.,	"
Currier, Frederick A.,	Fitchburg.	Morse, Harry G.,	"
Daniels, George T.,	"	Moulton, Edgar S.,	"
Daniels, John H.,	"	Nims, Francis E.,	Leominster.
Daniels, Mrs. Florence R. D.,	"	Norcross, Amasa,	Fitchburg.
Davis, Walter A.,	"	Ordway, Alfred R.,	"
Dillon, David M.,	"	Prescott, Mrs. Jennie M.,	Leominster.
Dillon, Fred N.,	"	†Putnam, Henry O.,	Fitchburg.
Downe, Edward P.,	"	Raymond, Mrs. Charlotte M.,	"
Edgerly, Joseph G.,	"	Raymond, George,	"
Emerson, William A.,	"	Rice, Charles H.,	"
Faxon, John G.,	"	Rockwell, Henry F.,	"
Fisher, Jabez,	"	Smith, Mrs. Ardelia C.,	"
Fisher, Jabez F.,	"	Snow, Mrs. Margaret P.,	"
Fosdick, Charles,	"	Spring, Clarence W.,	"
Fosdick, Mrs. Mary L.,	"	Stratton, Charles C.,	"
Garfield, James F. D.,	"	Thompson, Mrs. Harriet F. H.,	"
Goodrich, Edwin A.,	"	Thompson, J. Edward,	"

\*Deceased.

†Life members.

Torrey, Mrs. Sarah A.,	Fitchburg.	Ware, Charles E.,	Fitchburg.
Townend, Harry G.,	"	Wellman, Mrs. Louise H.,	"
Upham, Nathan C.,	"	Weyman, Mrs. Martha L.,	"
Upton, John,	"	Weymouth, George W.,	"
Upton, Mrs. Louisa C.,	"	Willis, Henry A.,	"
Wallace, Mrs. Helen A.,	"	Willis, William M.,	"
†Wallace, Rodney,	"		

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### CORRESPONDING MEMBERS.

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BALL, REV. GEORGE S., Upton.  
 BARDEEN, JOHN W., Syracuse, N. Y.  
 BOUTWELL, MISS GEORGIANNA A., Groton.  
 BURRAGE, REV. HENRY S., Portland, Me.  
 CALDWELL, THOMAS C., Dorchester.  
 CASWELL, L. B., Athol.  
 GREENE, DR. JAMES S., Dorchester.  
 HULING, RAY GREENE, Cambridge.  
 MACK, THOMAS, Boston.  
 PHILLIPS, COL. IVERS, Boulder, Col.  
 \*ROBINSON, EX-GOV. CHARLES, Lawrence, Kan.  
 SHEPLEY, FRANCIS B., Boston.  
 SIMONDS, JOHN, San Francisco, Cal.  
 STEARNS, HON. EZRA S., Rindge, N. H.  
 TINKER, FRANCIS, Norwood.  
 \*TOWNE, GEORGE E., Brookline.

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\*Deceased.

†Life members.

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